

110th Congress, 1st SessionHouse Document 110-40

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
107th NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES

[SUMMARY OF MINUTES]



Reno, Nevada :: August 26 - August 31, 2006

107TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

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PROCEEDINGS
of the
107th ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES
(SUMMARY OF MINUTES)

Reno, Nevada

August 26-31, 2006



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NATIONAL ENCAMPMENTS OF VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS; PROCEEDINGS
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The proceedings of the national encampments of the United Spanish War Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the American Legion, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Veterans of World War I of the United States, Incorporated, the Disabled American Veterans, and the AMVETS (American Veterans of World War II), respectively, shall be printed annually, with accompanying illustrations, as separate House documents of the session of the Congress to which they may be submitted.

[Approved October 2, 1968.]

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES,
RENO, NEVADA, April, 2007

Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Speaker U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker: In conformance with the provisions of Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 22, 1968, I am transmitting to you herewith the proceedings of the 106th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Reno, Nevada, August 26-31, 2006, which is submitted for printing as a House Document.

Sincerely,



Allen "Gunner" Kent
Adjutant General

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE
SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 2006

Call to Order	1
Advance of Colors	1
Invocation	2
Memorial Ritual	2
Symbolic Tribute	3
Introduction of Speaker	3
Memorial Address	4
Benediction	5
RECESS	6

JOINT OPENING SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2006

Advancement of Colors	7
Invocation	7
Pledge of Allegiance	8
Introduction of Commander-in-Chief Mueller and Presentation of the Official Convention Badge	8
Remarks by Commander-in-Chief Mueller	9
Presentation of VFW Gold Medal of Merit and Citation to National President Sandy Germany	10
Response – National President Sandy Germany	11
Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation to the Convention Committee Response – Comrade Donald Myers	12
Greetings – Councilman Dave Aiazzi	12
Introduction of General Kao, Hua-chu, Minister, Republic of China Veterans Affairs Commission	13
Greetings – General Kao, Hau-chu.	13
Presentation of Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Past Commander-in-Chief John Furgess	15
Response – Past Commander-in-Chief John Furgess	16
Presentation of 2006 VFW Citizenship Award	17
Response – Mr. Kenneth Behring.	17
Introduction of Voice of Democracy Winner – Kate Siegel	19
Voice of Democracy Winner	20
Presentation of Awards to 2006 All-American Commanders	22
MIP Conversion Contest Winners.	25
Presentation of 2006 VFW Armed Forces Award	25
Response – Lieutenant General Harold Moore	26
Introduction of the Honorable Richard Cheney, Vice-President of the United States	27
Remarks by Vice-President Cheney.	27

Presentation of the National Recruiter of the Year Award	35
Appreciation by the Departments of Mississippi and Louisiana	35
Introduction of R. Lee Ermey	37
Response – Comrade R. Lee Ermey	38
RECESS	40

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2006

Call to Order	41
Report of Convention Rules Committee	41
Report of Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual	43
Report of Committee on Finance and Internal Organization	48
Report on Committee on Veterans Service Resolution	49
Report of the Credentials Committee	56
Report of Committee on General Resolutions	56
Report of Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs	58
Report of Subcommittee on POW-MIA	62
Benediction	64
RECESS	64

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS BANQUET
MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2006

Welcome	65
Invocation	65
Introduction of Distinguished Guests	66
Introduction of Commander-in-Chief Mueller	67
Remarks - Commander-in-Chief James Mueller	67
Introduction of National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW	68
Remarks – Ladies Auxiliary President Sandy Germany	68
Presentation of the VFW Hall of Fame Award	69
Response – Mr. Charlie Daniels	69
Presentation of the VFW Dwight D. Eisenhower Distinguished Service Award	70
Response – Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld	72
Benediction	76
RECESS	77

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION
TUESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2006

Call to Order	78
Opening Prayer	78
Pledge of Allegiance	78
Report of Credentials Committee	78
Presentation to Commander-in-Chief Mueller by the 2005-2006 Department Commanders	78
Presentation by Jim Chancellor to Commander-in-Chief Mueller	79
Introduction of Supreme Commander of the MOC	81
Remarks – MOC Supreme Commander Lyons	81
Patriots Pin Donation	82
Introduction of Mr. Joe Galloway	83
Army Memorial Project	83
Introduction of James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs	88
Remarks by VA Secretary James Nicholson	88
Presentation of Distinguished Service Awards and Citations	94
Response- Comrade Darrell Bencken	94
Response – Comrade Cecil “Buck” Caruso	95
Response – Comrade Michael L. Furgal	96
Response – Past Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak	96
Introduction of Jack Nicholson, Director of the American Battle Monuments Commission	97
Remarks – Brigadier General Jack Nicholson	97
Presentation of the Challenge of the Future Awards	101
Response – Comrade Robert Mulligan	102
Response – Comrade Stephen Schlueter	102
Presentation of the 2006 Americanism Award	102
Response – Dr. Richard Carmona	103
Presentation of Award by Political Action Committee	110
Presentation of “Consecutive Years of Membership” Citation	110
Presentation of VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Leo Andrew	111
Response – Comrade Leo Andrew	112
Presentation of VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Larry Gniotczynski	112
Response – Comrade Larry Gniotczynski	113
National Home Representatives	113
Remarks by Comrade Dana Hussey	113
Remarks by Executive Director Green	114
Remarks by Buddy Poppy Child Samantha Spitzley	116
Benediction and Salute to the Colors	118
RECESS	118

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2006

Call to Order	119
Opening Prayer	119
Pledge of Allegiance	119
Report of Credentials Committee	119
Introduction of Parliamentarian	119
Introduction of National Sergeants-at-Arms	120
Introduction of Jan Scruggs	121
Remarks by Mr. Jan Scruggs	121
Presentation of Certificate of Recognition to Robert Milby	127
Response – Comrade Robert Milby	127
Introduction of Lieutenant General Jack Stultz, Chief of Army Reserve	128
Remarks – Lieutenant General Jack Stultz	129
Presentation of VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to James Magill	140
Response – Comrade Jim Magill	141
Ladies Auxiliary National President Sandy Germany	141
Response – Ladies Auxiliary President Sandy Germany	141
Presentation of VFW Gold Medal of Merit and Citation to Nancy Pomeroy	144
Response – Ms. Nancy Pomeroy	144
Presentation of VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Austin Smith	146
Response – Comrade Austin Smith	147
Presentation of the 2006 VFW Aviation and Space Award	148
Response – Mr. Mike Melvill	149
Introduction of Past Commanders-in-Chief	150
VFW Political Action Committee Presentation	151
Response – Past Commander-in-Chief Cooper T. Holt	151
Announcement of Winners of the National Buddy Poppy Contest	153
VFW National Home Trustees Nominated	154
Nomination of Commander-in-Chief	154
Nomination of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	155
Nomination of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	157
Nomination of Quartermaster General	160
Nomination of Judge Advocate General	161
Nomination of Surgeon General	162
Nomination of National Chaplain	163
Benediction	164
RECESS	164

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION
THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2006

Call to Order	165
Opening Prayer	165
Salute to the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance	165
Presentation by Commander John Stroud	165
Completion of Convention Business	166
Report of Credentials Committee	166
Introduction of National Officers	166
Election of Officers	167
Election of Commander-in-Chief	167
Remarks by Commander-in-Chief-Elect	167
Election of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	167
Remarks by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect	168
Election of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	168
Remarks by Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect	169
Election of Quartermaster General	169
Remarks by Quartermaster General-Elect	170
Election of Judge Advocate General	170
Remarks by Judge Advocate General-Elect	171
Election of Surgeon General	171
Remarks by Surgeon General-Elect	171
Election of National Chaplain	171
Remarks by National Chaplain-Elect	172
Placement of Caps, Pins and Badges	173
Announcement of National Council Members-Elect	173
Announcement of Appointments	173
Installation of Officers	174
Presentation of Past Commander-in-Chief Lapel Pin and Gold Life Membership Card	177
Acceptance Address by Commander-in-Chief Kurpius	178
Closing Ceremonies	183
ADJOURNMENT	183

COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

(Including societies that amalgamated to form Veterans of Foreign Wars)

The Veterans of Foreign Service and the Army of the Philippines amalgamated at Denver, CO, August 1913, forming the Veterans of Foreign Wars as it is today. However, the birth of the order dates from September 29, 1899, when the first national officers were elected and the eligibility clause adopted. The original chapter was granted October 11, 1899.

* indicates deceased

American Veterans of Foreign Service

1899-1900	James C. Putnam*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1900-1901	Maj. Will S. White*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1901-1902	Maj. Will S. White*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1902-1903	James Romanis*	Elected at Washington Courthouse, Ohio.
1903-1904	James Romanis*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1904-1905	James Romanis*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1905-1906	George Metzger*	Elected at Altoona, Pennsylvania.
1906-1907	Charles H. Devereaux*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1907-1908	David T. Nevin*	Elected at James Exposition Grounds, Virginia.
1908-1909	J. Alfred Judge*	Elected at Lebanon, Pennsylvania.
1909-1910	J. Alfred Judge*	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910-1911	Robert J. Woodside*	Elected at Jersey City, New Jersey.
1911-1912	Robert J. Woodside*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1912-1913	Robert J. Woodside*	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

American Veterans of Foreign Service (Eastern Branch)

1903-1904	Capt. Robert S. Hansburg *	Elected at Altoona, Pennsylvania.
1904-1905	H.O. Kelly *	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

(The above two organizations amalgamated September 1905, at Altoona, Pennsylvania.)

Army of the Philippines

1900-1901	Gen. Francis V. Greene *	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1901-1902	Gen. Irving Hale *	Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
1902-1903	Gen. Irvin Hale *	Elected at Council Bluffs, Iowa.
1903-1904	Gen. Charles King *	Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1904-1905	Gen. Wilder S. Metcalf *	Elected at St. Louis, Missouri.
1905-1906	Col. Alfred S. Frost *	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1906-1907	Gen. Arthur MacArthur *	Elected at Des Moines, Iowa.
1907-1908	Capt. H.A. Crow *	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
1908-1909	Maj. P.J.H. Farrell *	Elected at Galesburg, Illinois.
1909-1910	Col. Charles L. Jewett *	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910-1911	A.H. Anderson *	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1911-1912	F. Warner Karling *	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1912-1913	F. Warner Karling *	Elected at Lincoln, Nebraska.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

1913-1914 Rice W. Means*Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1914-1915 Thomas Crago *Elected at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.
1915-1916 Gus Hartung*Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1916-1917 Albert Rabin*Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1917-1918 William Ralston*Elected at New York, New York.
1918-1919 F. Warner Karling*Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1919-1920 F. Warner Karling*Elected at Providence, Rhode Island.
1920-1921 Robert G. Woodside*Elected at Washington, D.C.
1921-1922 Robert G. Woodside*Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1922-1923 Tillinghast Huston*Elected at Seattle, Washington.
1923-1924 Gen. Lloyd M. Brett*Elected at Norfolk, Virginia.
1924-1925 John H. Dunn*Elected at Atlantic City, New Jersey.
1925-1926 Fred Stover*Elected at Tulsa, Oklahoma.
1926-1927 Theodore Stitt*Elected at El Paso, Texas.
1927-1928 Frank T. Strayer*Elected at Providence, Rhode Island.
1928-1929 Eugene P. Carver*Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1929-1930 Kezekiah N. Duff*Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1930-1931 Paul C. Wolman*Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
1931-1932 Darold D. DeCoe*Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
1932-1933 Adm. Robert E. Coontz*Elected at Sacramento, California.
1933-1934 James E. Van Zandt*Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
1934-1935 James E. Van Zandt*Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
1935-1936 James E. Van Zandt*Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1936-1937 Bernard W. Kearny*Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1937-1938 Scott P. Squyres*Elected at Buffalo, New York.
1938-1939 Eugene I. Van Antwerp*Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1939-1940 Otis N. Brown*Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1940-1941 Joseph C. Menendez*Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1941-1942 Max Singer*Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1942-1943 Robert T. Merrill*Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1943-1944 Carl S. Schoeninger*Elected at New York, New York.
1944-1945 Jean A. Brunner*Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1945-1946 Joseph M. Stack*Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1946-1947 Louis E. Starr*Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1947-1948 Ray H. Brannaman*Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
1948-1949 Lyall T. Beggs *Elected at St. Louis, Missouri..
1949-1950 Clyde A. LewisElected at Miami, Florida.
1950-1951 Charles C. Ralls*Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1951-1952 Frank C. HiltonElected at New York, New York.
1952-1953 James W. Cothran*Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1953-1954 Wayne E. Richards*Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
1954-1955 Merton B. Tice*Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1955-1956 Timothy J. Murphy*Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1956-1957 Cooper T. HoltElected at Dallas, Texas.
1957-1958 Richard L. Roudebush*Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1958-1959 John W. MahanElected at New York, New York.
1959-1960 Louis G. Feldmann*Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1960-1961 T.C. Connell*Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1961-1962 Robert E. HansenElected at Miami Beach, Florida.

1962-1963	Byron B. Gentry*	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1963-1964	Joseph J Lombardo*	Elected at Seattle, Washinton.
1964-1965	John A Jenkins*	Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
1965-1966	Andy Borg*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1966-1967	Leslie M. Fry*	Elected at New York, New York.
1967-1968	Joseph A. Scerra*	Elected at New Olreans, Louisiana.
1968-1969	Richard W. Homan	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1969-1970	Raymond A. Gallagher*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1970-1971	Herbert R. Rainwater*	Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1971-1972	Joseph L. Vicites*	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1972-1973	Patrick E. Carr*	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1973-1974	Ray R. Soden	Elected at New Olreans, Louisiana.
1974-1975	John J. Stang	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1975-1976	Thomas C. Walker	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1976-1977	R.D. Smith Jr.....	Elected at New York, New York.
1977-1978	Dr. John Wasylik	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1978-1979	Eric Sandstrom	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1979-1980	Howard E. Vander Clute Jr.*	Elected at New Olreans, Louisiana.
1980-1981	T.C. Selman*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1980-1981	Arthur Fellwock	Succeeded T.C. Selman, Oct. 21, 1980.
1980-1981	Arthur Fellwock	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1982-1983	James R. Currieo	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1983-1984	Clifford G. Olson Jr.....	Elected at New Olreans, Louisiana.
1984-1985	Billy Ray Cameron	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1985-1986	John S. Staum	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1986-1987	Norman G. Staab.....	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1987-1988	Earl L. Stock*	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1988-1989	Larry W. Rivers.....	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1989-1990	Walter G. Hogan	Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1990-1991	James L. Kimery*	Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
1991-1992	Robert E. Wallace	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1992-1993	John M. Carney	Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1993-1994	George R. Cramer	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1994-1995	Allen F. "Gunner" Kent.....	Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1995-1996	Paul A. Spera	Elected at Phoenix, Arizona.
1996-1997	James E. Nier	Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
1997-1998	John E. Moon.....	Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
1998-1999	Thomas A. Pouliot.....	Elected at San Antonio, Texas
1999-2000	John W. Smart	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri
2000-2001	John F. Gwizdak.....	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin
2001-2002	James N. Goldsmith	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin
2002-2003	Raymond C. Sisk	Elected at Nashville, Tennessee
2003-2004	Edward S. Banas, Sr.....	Elected at San Antonio, Texas
2004-2005	John Furgess.....	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio
2005-2006	James R. Mueller	Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah
2006-2007	Gary L. Kurpius	Elected at Reno, Nevada

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 2005-2006

Commander-in-ChiefJames R. Mueller
Senior Vice Commander-in-ChiefGary L. Kurpius
Junior Vice Commander-in-ChiefGeorge J. Lisicki
Adjutant GeneralAllen F. (Gunner) Kent
Quartermaster GeneralLawrence M. Maher
Judge Advocate GeneralRichard F. Therrien
Surgeon GeneralLinda J. Fairbank
National ChaplainDean Derieg
National Chief of StaffJohn L. Dahman
Inspector GeneralDan G. Petersen
Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Director
 Washington OfficeRobert E. Wallace
Assistant Adjutant General-OperationsJohn J. McNeill
Assistant Quartermaster General/
 Chief Information OfficerRobert B. Greene
Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General-
 OperationsRobert W. Crow
Senior Director, AdministrationLawrence LeFebvre
Senior Director, DevelopmentRonald G. Browning
Senior Director, FoundationMichael J. Gormalley
Director, Administrative OperationsThomas L. Kissell
Director, Communications & Public AffairsJerry L. Newberry
Director, Emblem & Supply DepartmentM. L. "Bud" Cale
Director, General ServicesDavid L. Swindler
Director, Member Dues ProcessingRobert A. Crider
Director, MembershipJames R. Rowoldt
Director, Military Assistance ProgramBuddy J. Haney
Director, Publications & Editor, VFW MagazineRichard K. Kolb
Director, Programs, Youth/Special ProjectsStephen L. Van Buskirk
Director, VFW PropertiesBilly R. Weissend
Director, Administration, WashingtonRobert J. Gardner
National Service Officer & Director,
 National Veterans ServiceWilliam L. Bradshaw
Director, National Legislative ServiceDennis M. Cullinan
Director, National Security & Foreign AffairsMichael H. Wysong
Director, Communications &
 Public Affairs, WashingtonJoseph E. Davis
Manager, Meetings & EventsVanessa Kane, CMP

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS 2005-2006

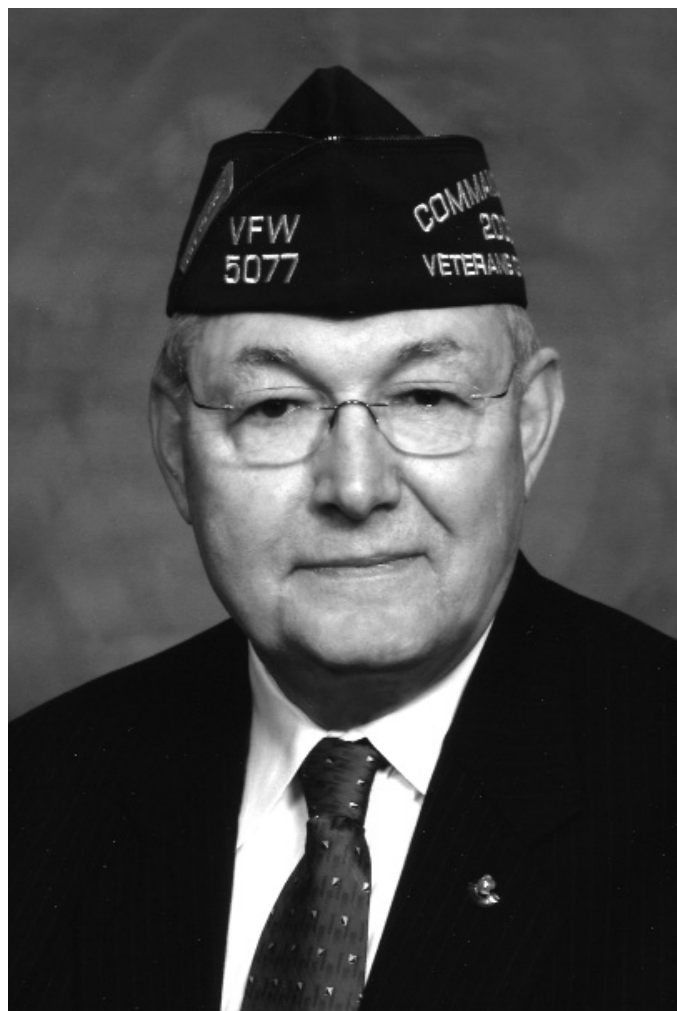
District No. 1(ME NH)	Billy Joe Floyd
District No. 2 (MA VT)	Walter G. Gansenberg
District No. 3 (MD NJ)	Ronald Dickens
District No. 4 (DC DE EU)	Clifford D. Fields
District No. 5 (IN MO)	Paul G. Jones
District No. 6 (VA WV)	Randall L. Bare
District No. 7 (KY TN)	Michael J. Penney
District No. 8 (AL GA)	Rayburn M. Hill
District No. 9 (NC SC)	Arthur A. Shull
District No.10 (AR OK)	A. M. Armstrong
District No.11 (IA WI)	William B. Desplanque
District No.12 (ND WY)	Theodore A. Krogen
District No.13 (CO KS)	Stephen L. Phelps
District No.14 (ID MT WA)	Richard A. Whipple
District No.15 (AZ NM)	Jesus R. Gonzalez
District No.16 (AK HI LAT AM/CAR PAC AREAS)	Darryl S. Dalley
District No.17 (NV OR UT)	Dennis G. Guthrie
District No.18 (CT RI)	Armondo C. Azzinaro
District No.19 (LA MS)	Charles E. Wiggins
District No. 21 (MN NE)	Stephen J. O'Conner
District No. 23 (MI SD)	Jack L. Pickard
District A (PA)	Franklin E. Lopes
District B (IL)	Charles R. Brimm
District C (NY)	James M. Longendyke
District D (OH)	Gregorio J. Vela
District G (CA)	John L. Fitzke
District H (TX)	Danny R. Henry
District J (FL)	Eugene LeShore
Past Commander-in-Chief	John Furgess

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

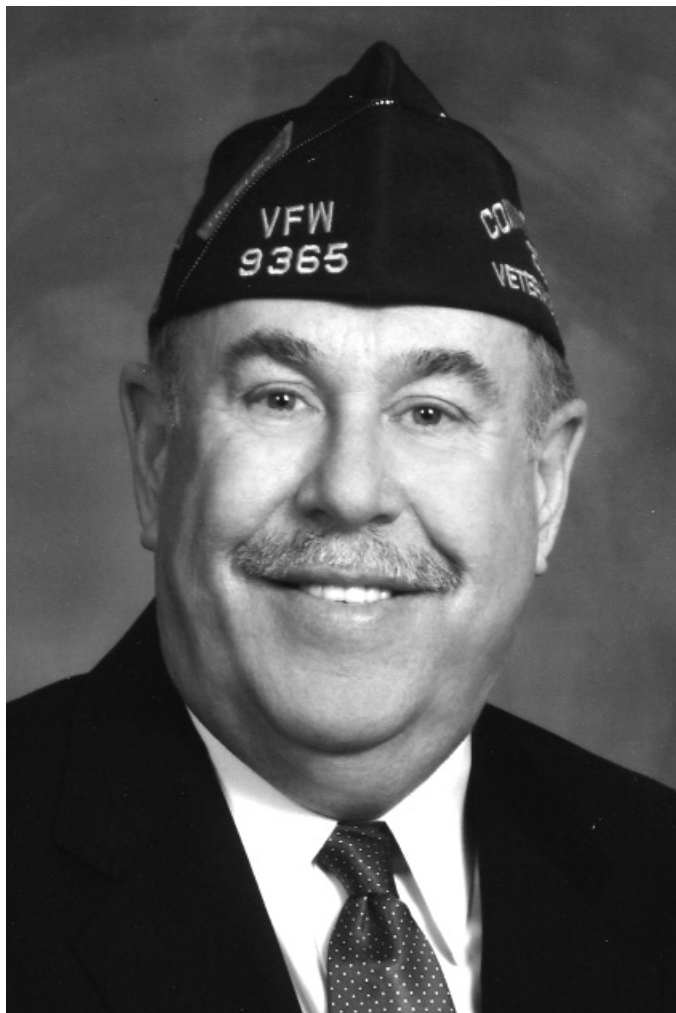
	POST
Barry A. Hoffman6240 KS

NATIONAL ASSISTANT SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS

	POST
Gary W. Barringer9134 NC
Joy Ausman3979 MN
James M. Galen6802 MI
Keith J. MacDonald2275 CA
Bryan P. O'Brien2394 MA
Joseph P. Schirmers4847 MN
L. Edward Villiaume, III6827 FL



James R. Mueller
Commander-in-Chief
2005-2006



Gary L. Kurpius
Commander-in-Chief
2006-2007

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 2006-2007

Commander-in-Chief Gary L. Kurpius
 Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief George J. Lisicki
 Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Glen M. Gardner, Jr.
 Adjutant General Allen F. (Gunner) Kent
 Quartermaster General Lawrence M. Maher
 Judge Advocate General Kenneth R. Burton, Jr.
 Surgeon General William L. Self
 National Chaplain Charlene K. Cobb
 National Chief of Staff John W. Minnick
 Inspector General Wayne L. Paulson
 Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Director
 Washington Office Robert E. Wallace
 Assistant Adjutant General-Operations John J. McNeill
 Assistant Quartermaster General/
 Chief Information Officer Robert B. Greene
 Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General-
 Operations Robert W. Crow
 Senior Director, Foundation Michael J. Gormalley
 Director, Administrative Operations Thomas L. Kissell
 Director, Communications & Public Affairs Jerry L. Newberry
 Director, Emblem & Supply Department M. L. "Bud" Cale
 Director, General Services David L. Swindler
 Director, Member Dues Processing Robert A. Crider
 Director, Membership James R. Rowoldt
 *Deputy Director, Military Assistance Program Buddy J. Haney
 *Director, Military Assistance Program Michael J. Penney
 *Acting Director, Military Assistance Program Crystal Lauver
 Director, Publications & Editor, VFW Magazine Richard K. Kolb
 Director, VFW Properties Billy R. Weissend
 Director, Programs, Youth/Special Projects Stephen L. Van Buskirk
 Director, Administration, Washington Robert J. Gardner
 National Service Officer & Director,
 National Veterans Service William L. Bradshaw
 Director, National Legislative Service Dennis M. Cullinan
 Director, National Security & Foreign Affairs Michael H. Wysong
 Director, Communications &
 Public Affairs, Washington Joseph E. Davis
 Manager, Meetings & Events Vanessa Kane, CMP
 *Program Personnel change mid-year

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS 2006-2007

DISTRICT 1	(ME NH)	Billy Joe Floyd
DISTRICT 2	(MA VT)	Rene E. Rocheleau
DISTRICT 3	(MD NJ)	Ronald Dickens
DISTRICT 4	(DC DE EU)	Mark M. Newman
DISTRICT 5	(IN MO)	Paul G. Jones
DISTRICT 6	(VA WV)	Daniel D. Boyer
DISTRICT 7	(KY TN)	Michael G. Penney
DISTRICT 8	(AL GA)	James R. Coggins
DISTRICT 9	(NC SC)	Arthur A. Shull
DISTRICT 10	(AR OK)	Kenneth C. Pike
DISTRICT 11	(IA WI)	William B. Desplanque
DISTRICT 12	(ND WY)	Harold E. Lowe
DISTRICT 13	(CO KS)	Steven L. Phelps
DISTRICT 14	(ID MT WA)	Daniel K. Johnson
DISTRICT 15	(AZ NM)	Jesus R. Gonzalez
DISTRICT 16	(AK HI LAT AM/CAR PAC)	Robert W. Zaher
DISTRICT 17	(NV OR UT)	Dennis G. Guthrie
DISTRICT 18	(CT, RI)	*Stuart C. Headford
		Robert P. Tozzali
DISTRICT 19	(LA, MS)	Charles E. Wiggins
DISTRICT 21	(MN, NE)	Stephen J. O'Connor
DISTRICT 23	(MI, SD)	Jack L. Pickard
DISTRICT A	(PA)	Franklin E. Lopes
DISTRICT B	(IL)	Charles R. Brimm
DISTRICT C	(NY)	James M. Longendyke
DISTRICT D	(OH)	Keith E. Harman
DISTRICT G	(CA)	John L. Fitzke
DISTRICT H	(TX)	John R. Fair
DISTRICT J	(FL)	Eugene LeShore
Past Commander-in-Chief		James R. Mueller
* Deceased		

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

POST

Barry A. Hoffman6240 KS

NATIONAL ASSISTANT SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS

POST

Gary W. Barringer9134 NC
 Joy Ausman3979 MN
 James M. Galen6802 MI
 Keith J. MacDonald2275 CA
 Bryan P. O'Brien2394 MA
 Joseph P. Schirmers4847 MN
 L. Edward Villiaume, III6827 FL

**SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 107TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
RENO, NEVADA
AUGUST 26-31, 2006**

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE
SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 2006

(The Memorial Service of the 107th Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Reno, Nevada, was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief James Mueller presiding. The Gold Star parents, Gold Star Wives, National Officers and Past National Chaplains were escorted by the Sergeants-at-Arms.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please prepare the room for the Salute to the Colors and the National Anthem to be sung by Carol Massie.

ADVANCE OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the VFW National Honor Guard advanced the colors followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMRADE CAROLL MASSIE: Hello, everyone. My name is Carol Massie, Yeoman Senior Chief, United States Navy, Retired, and presently Post Commander of Post 228. We have just finished the Pledge of Allegiance, and now I will sing the National Anthem. First, did you know that two out of three Americans don't know the words to our National Anthem. The National Association for Music Education at the Smithsonian Institution and others have developed a National Anthem project to try to change that statistic and help more people to learn the song at the time the new flag is unveiled in 2007.

While it is tradition to stand while it is being sung, feel free to sit if you find it difficult to stand. I will be singing all four verses of Francis Scott Key's poem that he wrote the morning after watching the long battle of Fort McHenry some 212 years ago, and which officially became our country's National Anthem in 1931. Please listen to the words of this marvelous poem.

(Whereupon, Carol Massie sang the National Anthem at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Please be seated while the Carson Chamber Singers perform "Simple Gifts".

(Whereupon, the Carson Chamber Singers sang "Simple Gifts.")

INVOCATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Will you, please, stand for the Invocation by Father John Dain.

FATHER DAIN: Let us pray. Almighty God, King of the Universe, we thank you for life, for health and for strength. We thank you for a nation that we can say we are free, that we have the right today that your presence will be here, and bless all those that have the right to serve you according to dictates of our heart. We ask our blessings upon our gathering participants this day. We pray for those with authority over us, and we pray for the President, our nation. We pray for our troops, who are at home or abroad. Bless them and bless us here in this place today. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, Ladies of the Auxiliary and friends, we have met at this time to commemorate our comrades of the United States Armed Forces that have answered the last call. The VFW Ritual states the audience shall refrain from applauding. The Chief of Staff will see that there is no disturbance during the ceremonies.

NATIONAL CHIEF OF STAFF JOHN DAHMAN: Commander-in-Chief, your order will be obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I request that the National Chaplain preside.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DEAN DERIEG: It will be at this time that we will be able to hear the Carson Chamber Singers as they perform "America the Beautiful."

(Whereupon, the choir sang "America the Beautiful.")

MEMORIAL RITUAL

(At this time National Chaplain Derieg presided over the Memorial Ritual that was given at this time.)

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: Comrades, we are thankful to you for these inspiring thoughts. Let us learn the lessons of the hour, which is that we, too, are nearly at the end of life's pilgrimage and sooner or later these services, may be held in our memory. Let us believe that when our summons comes we may depart with good conscience and the comfort of a sincere religion, a belief in God and perfect charity toward all mankind. Let us pray.

Our great Father in Heaven, you have allowed us the privilege of being in this place. There are those of us who remember leaving friends behind, those that cannot be here, and those that could not come home to their friends, their neighbors and their loved ones. Father, we are gathered here today to remember them. Father, we ask that you touch the hearts and lives of their families and those that we have lost recently. Lord, we ask that you be with those families and those prisoners giving them comfort that can only come from you. In the hour of those that may be prisoners of war, those who are missing in action, those who guard their country, those gates of freedom today, those young men and women all around the world serving today.

Lord, as we are in the service of remembrance, let us also remember

them. We thank you, O, Lord, for the privilege of being in this place, to be the survivor, the one to carry on for those who cannot carry on any longer. Father, this is our prayer as we go to you this morning in this service. Thank you. Amen.

Betty Morris, Assistant National Soloist to the Ladies Auxiliary, will now present "Sleep Soldier Boy".

(Whereupon, Assistant National Soloist of the Ladies Auxiliary sang "Sleep Soldier Boy" at this time.)

SYMBOLIC TRIBUTE

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: Comrades, in commemoration of the first use of our departed heroes who served their country in time of need, we now offer our symbolic tributes. I place upon our sacred shrine these red flowers, which symbolize the seal of our departed comrades in upholding brotherhood, truth and justice.

Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief, what tributes have you to offer?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FURGESS: These white flowers are placed as a token of purity and affection that we have for our departed comrades.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, do you have a tribute to offer upon this sacred shrine?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: The blue of our national standard symbolizes truth and fidelity, therefore, I place these blue flowers as a token of our respect for all of our departed comrades.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: Ladies of the Auxiliary, will you offer a tribute to the memory of our departed comrades?

NATIONAL LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT GERMANY: I place upon our sacred shrine this wreath as a symbol of eternity. Its colors speak to our everlasting that we say will be the soldiers, sailors and the men that are on land, on sea and in the air or immortalized in the hearts of a grateful nation.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: It is at this time that we will hear "Johnny's Coming Home" by Vondelle Avera-Busby, Ladies Auxiliary National Soloist.

(Whereupon, Ladies Auxiliary National Soloist Vondelle Avera-Busby sang "Johnny's Coming Home.")

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Born and raised in Sparks, Nevada, United States Congressman Jim Gibbons was first elected to represent Nevada's Second District in the House of Representatives in 1996. He was re-elected for his fifth term in November, 2004. In Congress, he serves on the House Resources Committee, the Armed Forces Committee, and meeting on Homeland Security.

Prior to coming to Congress, Mr. Gibbons had a distinguished military background. He is a former combat pilot and decorated veteran of both the Vietnam and the Persian Gulf War. He served in the United States Army from 1967 to 1971, and graduated from the U.S. Air Force Air Command and the Staff College, as well as the War College. Throughout his military

service, Congressman Gibbons received 19 service medals, including the Legion of Merit and the Distinguished Flying Cross. Congressman Gibbons resides in Reno with his wife Dawn, and they have three children and two grandchildren. Please welcome Congressman Gibbons.

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

CONGRESSMAN GIBBONS: Good morning, everyone. It is indeed a genuine honor and privilege to be here this morning in this memorial service. You know, memorial services for those of us who are left to celebrate the sacrifices, the dedication and the service of so many who have gone before us.

As I think of the last stanza two verses of our National Anthem, we are truly blessed to live in the land of the free and the home of the brave. You know, today we are sitting here in a room with thousands of people who know, believe and feel the sacrifices of all those who have gone before us. Yet, there are thousands more outside who think today is just another ordinary day in their lives.

August 27, 2006, will sadly tell us of another sacrifice of a fallen soldier, sailor or airman somewhere in this world who has given the ultimate sacrifice to protect our dreams so that we can remain the land of the free and the home of the brave. You know, today when we think of memorial services, too often we think of the passing of these gray-area old men, but yet on today's battlefield the cross is growing.

The young man is young, 17 and 18 years old, are giving their lives to protect our freedoms. Today, like many of you, they left their homes and left their jobs and their families, and they left behind those birthdays and anniversaries, those barbecue picnics that many will undertake today. They left behind the graduations of kids, and their parents and whoever it may be. Yet they went on proudly as many of you to serve their country.

You know, I was blessed as being able to serve in the United States Congress ten years. When I look on the lessons of life, I think the greatest honor I have been given is to serve my country through times of war and times of peace. To have the opportunity to memorialize and celebrate the sacrifices of so many wonderful people is truly the greatest honor and greatest blessing I could have.

As I think back, all of the things that many of the people have thought about, when we have a memorial service, I think of my parents and my uncles who all served in World War II. I think of Jimmy Johnson. I think of my 18-year-old son who is today in uniform for his country.

And I know like many of you that these young men will never come home sometimes to see those anniversaries, those birthdays, and we know that they will sometimes pay the ultimate sacrifice so that we may live in a safer and freer world.

Throughout the time I have served in Congress, I have made our veterans my number one goal. My number one goal is to make sure that we improve the quality of life for all of you, all of those who have served their country, adding those benefits that are necessary to make sure we provide and keep those promises that this nation made to you.

So, today, let us all renew our promise to every veteran that we will

work not just to memorialize those who have gone before us, but we will work to preserve and protect this country and the individuals who have sacrificed their lives. We will work to preserve and protect the promises that this nation has made to our veterans so that we can live in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Many of these young people we talk about in the global war on terrorism today have come to Nevada. In fact, every day I am reminded of that challenge. I keep a card of every name, of every soldier, sailor or airman who has made that sacrifice from Nevada, because as I represent the people of not just Nevada but of this country, I want to be reminded of just what they have given so that I am encouraged to do my very best.

I want to thank you for allowing me to be here today and I want to encourage you to take up the call that we all have promised, that we will preserve and protect this country, that we will preserve and protect the freedoms, we will preserve and protect those veterans who have made this country what it is for each and every one of us, from our forefathers and to the current 18-year-old who is serving on the battlefields around the globe.

I want you to enjoy the rest of your day today, and I hope the rest of the world enjoys their freedom for you have made that possible to them. Thank you and God bless you, and God bless this great country.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: Now, brothers and sisters, the Carson Chamber Singers will present the "Lord's Prayer".

(Whereupon, the Carson Chamber Singers sang the "Lord's Prayer.")

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: Comrades and sisters, we have come to that portion of the service for the benediction. Today we have with us Reverend Ron Carter to give the benediction, after which will be followed by Taps. At the end of the Taps, we are going to request that everyone stay in their place. Do not wander through the hall, do not talk with your friends or neighbors for a few moments. The National Sergeants will then escort the Gold Star Parents and Gold Star Wives, those who have made a sacrifice that our prayer has always been no one will have to pay. In their honor, if you would, please stay in your place standing in honor of those who have given so very much. They and the National Chaplains will be led out separately. As soon as they leave the hall, then you may disperse.

Ladies and gentlemen, Reverend Carter.

REVEREND RON CARTER: Let us pray. We thank you, Father, for all of our brave men and women who have given their lives for their country. We realize that none of us cherish the thought of having to pay the supreme price of death for our country, which these young men and women have had to pay. We are thankful for these who have been willing to give their lives even for the peace of the world and the freedom that we have enjoyed here this morning. Look down with compassion upon these loved ones. Give them comfort and understanding needed for this time. Help them to know that you love them, and in the midst of their sorrows they may find your presence.

We are thankful also for the men and women who were able to be with us to receive their honors. We are grateful for their dedicated service to God, their country and their fellow man. May your spirit go with them as

they continue to be a channel of service to others. Impress upon all of us as we depart from this place the importance of sacrificial giving of ourselves and service to God, to country and to our fellow man. May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds and the knowledge and love of God through his son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

May the blessing of God almighty, the father, the son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

(Whereupon, the Taps were had at this time followed by escorting of the Gold Star Parents, Gold Star Wives and National Chaplains from the hall.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade, your order has been obeyed, sir.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: Ladies and gentlemen, you are dismissed.

(Whereupon, the Memorial Service was concluded at 9:20 o'clock a.m.)

JOINT OPENING SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2006

(The Joint Opening Session of the 107th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the 93rd National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary, was called to order on Monday, August 28, 2006, at 8:00 o'clock a.m., in the Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Reno, Nevada, by Adjutant General "Gunner" Kent at 8:00 o'clock a.m.)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am "Gunner" Kent, the Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Welcome to the opening of the 107th National Convention. If you have cell phones, turn them off. Joining us this morning are the Commanders and Auxiliary Presidents of the 2005-2006 Outstanding Community Services Posts. Please stand as a group and be recognized.

This year 157 Commanders have earned the right to be named All-American. There are 31 Department Commanders, 24 District Commanders, and 102 Post Commanders. Commanders, please stand and be recognized. (Applause) Thank you very much.

It is now my great pleasure to introduce this year's National Convention Chairman from the great state of Nevada, Jack McMIndes.

COMRADE JACK McMINDES (Convention Chairman): I stood before you and welcomed you to the 1994 National Convention held in Las Vegas. This time I bring you greetings from 2,518,869 Nevada residents, and 9,039 VFW and Auxiliary members.

Welcome to our great state and the biggest little city, Reno. We are extremely proud to host the 107th National Convention. We sincerely hope the time you spend with us will renew your pride in our nation, rededicate your commitment to America's veterans and bring new excitement to your work as a member of the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary. Please rise as we officially open this convention with the advancing of the colors.

ADVANCEMENT OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the National Honor Guard advanced the colors at this time.)

INVOCATION

COMRADE McMINDES: For this morning's Invocation, we have the National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Dean Derieg.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: O, Lord, as we open this Joint Session of the 107th Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the 93rd Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary, we do so with an attitude of thanksgiving. Thank you for protecting America's borders. The Psalmist reminds us unless you, O, God, guard the territory, our efforts will be in vain.

Thank you for the men and women of our armed services who guard the gates of freedom, for those who have made and will make the ultimate

sacrifice to ensure America will always be one nation under God.

Bless all things that are said and done here that they be pleasing in your sight as we seek to serve the veterans of the greatest nation the world has ever known.

We humbly submit this prayer in our Lord's name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMRADE McMINDES: Please remain standing as we recite the Pledge of Allegiance, the singing of the National Anthem and the posting of the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was given at this time followed by the National Anthem by Ladies Auxiliary National Soloist Vondelle Avera-Busby. The Colors were posted at this time.)

COMRADE McMINDES: The house lights will now dim for a special presentation.

(Whereupon, a video presentation was presented regarding Commander-in-Chief Mueller's year of service.)

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER AND PRESENTATION OF THE OFFICIAL CONVENTION BADGE

COMRADE McMINDES: it is now my pleasure to introduce a gentleman who has served veterans for many years and is now our Commander-in-Chief. Jim served in the U.S. Army from 1966-'68. As a senior truck driver with the 446th Transportation Company, the 57th Transportation Battalion, Jim's unit played a key role in delivering essential supplies to combat ground and air units during the 1968 TET Offensive, as well as assisting U.S. Special Forces evacuate Montagnard Tribesmen from the area around Khe Sanh. He earned the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal.

Jim joined the VFW in 1970 at Post 5077 in O'Fallon, Missouri, where he maintains his Life Membership. He has served in various positions at the Post level achieving All-State Post Commander status in 1987-'88. In 1992-'93, he earned All-American Department Commander Department honors.

Jim has served on various National Committees, including Voice of Democracy, Homeless Veterans, National Security and Foreign Affairs, POW/MIA and Buddy Poppy. He served a two-year term as a VFW National Council member in 1997-1999, representing members from Missouri and Indiana.

In 1999, Jim served as the National Convention Chairman when the VFW celebrated its 100th Anniversary in Kansas City, Missouri.

Over the years, he has been active in his community and in his church. In 2000, he was named O'Fallon's Volunteer of the Year. In 1994, Jim was honored for his outstanding loyalty and support of the O'Fallon Fire Protection District.

Jim is a member of the Knights of Columbus, Am-Vets, American Legion and Order of the Cootie.

He is retired from General Motors Parts Division where he was employed for 34 years.

Please welcome our Commander-in-Chief James R. Mueller.

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Good morning, everyone. Before I begin my remarks, I want to take a moment to acknowledge all the courageous men and women of our military service as we meet valiantly defending our freedom. As all of you know, the Veterans of Foreign Wars is deeply involved in supporting the men and women of the armed forces and their families through our programs dedicated specifically for them. I am proud of what we have been able to do for them, what you will continue to do for all of them in the future.

I want to take a few moments to talk to all of you about some of the perspectives I have gained over this past year, what it has meant to me on a personal level for having the rare privilege of serving as your Commander-in-Chief. Most importantly, I want to thank each and every one of you for your dedicated service to the world's finest organization and those that we serve.

The words "thank you" do not adequately express the gratitude I have in my heart for the countless people who have demonstrated their unwavering support for me time and time again during this past year.

A year ago, during the 106th National Convention, I stood at this podium and delivered my acceptance remarks to you in a setting similar to this one. I remember conveying to you that it was time to accept and recognize that the winds of change was among us and would serve to propel this organization forward. We knew that tough decisions had to be made and we made them. I believe those decisions have been beneficial and have served this organization well. Last year, after the National Convention adjourned, little did we know that we would soon be confronted with the national disaster of great proportions by the way of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The VFW members in the Gulf regions were left devastated by those storms. We had an obligation and duty to rally behind our comrades and fellow citizens during their time of need, and the members stepped forward in magnificent fashion. Response to the situation was immediate, was overwhelming, generous, and nothing short of amazing. I want to thank all of you for that.

Again and again over the past months, members have provided assistance to those who needed it most, and certainly those who deserve it most. Because one thing I have learned over this past year is whatever the new challenges are, difficulty or circumstances may occur, our members will rise to the occasion with dignity, generosity and determination. The values and ideals that you have fought for during our military service, and you continue to defend today are the same as those shared by a majority of the people of our great nation.

Thirty years ago I lost a close and valuable friend in Vietnam. Although his life and those promises for potentials of what his life could have been ended far too soon, his sacrifice wasn't without meaning. Thirty years ago I made a promise to myself in memory of my friend. I vowed to dedicate myself to helping those who have helped to defend our nation while serving

in the military forces.

Thirty years ago, I never dreamed that by making that promise in remembrance of my friend I would one day be selected to serve as your Commander-in-Chief. I have done my best to fulfill that vow made so many years ago, that I know I wouldn't have been able to make good on that promise without your love and support throughout this year.

As my tenure as your Commander-in-Chief comes to an end, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you for helping me keep my promise. Thank you for the kindness and generosity, but most of all, thank you for your friendship.

PRESENTATION OF VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO NATIONAL PRESIDENT SANDY GERMANY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Sandy Germany was elected and installed as National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States at its 92nd National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, on August 25, 2005.

A Life Member of Kichler-Pippen Auxiliary No. 5658, in Elberta, Sandy is eligible through her brother, Ronald, who served two tours in Vietnam in the U.S. Air Force.

Her theme, "From Sea to Shining Sea, Freedom is Not Free", emphasizes her conviction that the sacrifices made for our freedom must never be forgotten.

Guided by her leadership, the Ladies Auxiliary is working toward those goals, doing all it can for veterans and those serving on the front lines in the war against terrorism, as well as helping the families left at home.

Sandy believes that it is our responsibility to honor them when they return home and repay them for their service by assisting them as they make the transition back to civilian life.

I am, therefore, very pleased to now present the VFW Gold Medal of Merit to National President Sandy Germany.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The citation reads as follows:

"Gold Medal of Merit and this Citation awarded to Sandy Germany, National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, 2005-2006.

"In sincere recognition of her untiring dedication to our country and in sincere appreciation for her outstanding leadership as evidenced by the exceptional contributions of the Ladies Auxiliary to the purposes and programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Her theme of 'Sea to Shining Sea, Freedom is not Free' addressed her resolve and commitment to assist active duty military and their families and not only inspired everyone she met, but will serve as the true legacy of her presidency.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 28th day of August, 2006." This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – NATIONAL PRESIDENT SANDY GERMANY

NATIONAL PRESIDENT SANDY GERMANY: Commander-in-Chief Mueller, National VFW and Ladies Auxiliary Officers, Past Commanders-in-Chief, Past National Presidents, Comrades, Sisters and Guests:

I am so very honored to receive this award from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Serving as National President of the Ladies Auxiliary is a remarkable experience, and I want to thank all of the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary members here today for making my year so enjoyable.

Your tireless service to veterans and to our communities “from sea to shining sea” across this great land of ours is what helps make our country great.

You need only to see the smiles on the faces of the Voice of Democracy winners, or our active-duty military as you hand them one of our Operation Uplink long-distance calling cards to know that our programs are right on target.

I am so very proud of you and of belonging to our great organization.

This convention marks the end of the 92nd year that the Ladies Auxiliary has partnered with the VFW, and as we move close to that one hundredth year together, I know that there are even greater things we will accomplish together.

It has been my pleasure to serve as National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and a blessing that I had the opportunity to serve with Commander-in-Chief Mueller.

Commander-in-Chief Mueller, I wish for you and all the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars a very successful convention, and I would like to start it off with a surprise.

Each year the Ladies Auxiliary VFW presents special awards to those whose humanitarian efforts have contributed to the health and well-being of our fellow countrymen. I have decided to present this award this morning when we are all together because this person has greatly affected both the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary.

Our theme this year is “From Sea to Shining Sea, Freedom is not Free”, and like so many of you here today, this person knows firsthand the precious cost of freedom. This person understands that America’s men and women have died on foreign soil when they were much too young, and they left families and children and loved ones at home. And as a result, this person has led a life dedicated to making sure they were not forgotten.

Generous by nature, this person has given in a multitude of ways, not only to veterans but to our organization. This individual has helped us remember the true goals of our organization, looking back at our roots as well as ahead to our dreams.

Ladies and gentlemen and friends, it is with great, great pleasure that I am able to present the Ladies Auxiliary VFW’s Freedom Award to Commander-in-Chief Jim Mueller. (Applause)

Jim, it is my pleasure to present this award to you and to give you this \$5,000 donation for the organization that helped you and Pat adopt your daughter.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, Sandy. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATION OF APPRECIATION
TO THE 106TH NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is now my distinct pleasure to present a Certificate of Appreciation to the 106th National Convention Committee for their work in planning and conducting last year's very successful National Convention at Salt Lake City.

Here to accept the award on behalf of the Committee is Donald B. Myers, the Convention Committee Chairman for the 106th National Convention.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The Certificate of Appreciation presented to the 106th National Convention Committee.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of their dedication and tireless efforts to insure the success of the 106th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States held in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 20-25, 2005.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 28th day of August, 2006." This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – COMRADE DONALD MYERS

COMRADE DONALD MYERS: I want to thank Commander Furgess for appointing me as Chairman, and you can see that this surprises me because I am not dressed for the occasion. I want to thank my Committee and co-workers for putting on a good convention in Salt Lake City, and I will continue to do the work for the VFW. Thank you. (Applause)

GREETINGS – COUNCILMAN DAVE AIAZZI

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, Don. As we have already experienced, Reno is known for its remarkably warm hospitality. No doubt when we all leave the greatest little city in the world, it will be with a host of lasting memories. Here to greet us today is a Council member from the City of Reno, Dave Aiazzi.

COUNCILMAN AIAZZI: Man, I have got to tell you, this is the largest group I have ever had the opportunity to speak in front of. But if there were only ten of you, it would still be the most prestigious. I can't imagine a better place to be right now. Thank you. When I came in today, they let me at the front of the security line, and the guy I had to get in front of me said, "I will let you in as long as you keep it short." So, I am going to honor that promise. I am going to start by giving you two things about Reno that you may not know that you can take back with you.

Number one, Reno is named for General Jesse Reno, who was a Civil War General, a graduate of West Point.

Another thing I like to tell people is you will get along much better with the natives if you pronounce the name of our state correctly. It is "Nevada". I don't know, it is "Nevada" and not "Nevaida". You don't say "Montono" or "Alaboma." It is Nevada. You will get along much better if you say that.

I don't know which slot machines are better than the rest. There are a lot of things to do in Reno. We have laid out the red carpet for you and the blue skies. It has been such a wonderful weekend. I hope you are all getting a chance to enjoy the outdoors. There is a lot of important work that you are doing today. I really hope you get a chance to visit the museums and the new veterans park downtown. We built it right on Virginia Street, so that our monuments are not spread around the city in small little out-of-the-way places. They are a block from City Hall where everyone driving down our busy street can see them so we can appreciate what you do, what you have done.

I am going to close really quickly here and just say you have heard from a Congressman, you are going to hear from the Secretary of Defense and even the Vice-President of the United States. They are all much more eloquent than I, but none can be more heartfelt when they tell you how much they appreciate what you have done for our country.

Elected to represent you, this doesn't happen in any other country on earth, and I am so proud that you have chosen Reno to come here. You are welcome back any time. Thank you very much. Have a pleasant stay. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL KAO, HUA-CHU, MINISTER, REPUBLIC OF CHINA VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is now my privilege to introduce General Kao, Hua-chu, the Minister of the Veterans Affairs Commission for the Republic of China. General Kao served his nation in uniform for more than 35 years before he became Minister of the Veterans Affairs Commission, which is similar to our Department of Veterans Affairs.

The General and his wife were gracious hosts to us all last month during our visit to Taiwan, and I am very pleased that he could join us again for our convention this year.

Ladies and gentlemen, General Kao. (Applause)

GREETINGS – GENERAL KAO, HUA-CHU

GENERAL KAO: Good morning, everybody. Commander-in-Chief Mueller, National President Germany, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am greatly honored to be invited again to address your National Convention for the second time since I was appointed Minister of the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China on Taiwan on May 20, 2005.

Last year, I attended your National Convention in Salt Lake City where everybody was stimulated. But this year your Chief, Mr. Mueller, and your new Adjutant General, "Gunner" Kent, arranged for you to come to this great City of Reno to get stimulated for better or for worse.

My dear friends in the VFW, on behalf of my colleagues and my fellow veterans in the Republic of China on Taiwan, I wish you a successful 2006 National Convention and a wonderful stay during this week. I mentioned last year that the VFW and the VAC have built a very strong relationship for

over 40 years, and in 1980 the VFW and the VAC formally entered into a brotherhood relationship, which was the first brotherhood relationship the VAC ever entered with a veterans organization in another country.

Now, 25 years later, in 2005, your Past Commander-in-Chief, Mr. Furgess and I were privileged to renew the brotherhood memorandum during your Salt Lake City Convention. Now I am here again representing my organization, the Veterans Affairs Commission, to continue our long-bound tradition with your esteemed organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, led by Commander-in-Chief Jim Mueller.

Four weeks ago, I had been privileged to personally received Commander-in-Chief and Mrs. Mueller, and the Assistant Adjutant General and Mr. McNeill in Taipei. There were some concerns on their duty to visit as many overseas veteran members of the VFW as possible, and they only stayed three nights in Taiwan. However, we still managed to arrange for them to meet with your members in Taipei. We took them to visit the Veterans General Hospital, which is the biggest one in Southeast Asia. We have also taken them to visit our Taipei Veterans Home, which is the largest home care center for Chinese veterans from the Korean War in Southeast Asia. They had the chance to go through it. They had the chance to go to the top and see the snow mountains, which again is a marvelous thing in Southeast Asia.

Of course, we did not miss to go up to Taipei 101, which is so far the tallest building in the world. We were able to thank the installations for providing care for our veterans and we are proud of our achievements done by our retired servicemen.

Ladies and gentlemen, we were all soldiers once, and we have experienced the old soldiers continue in exchange for the safety of theirs and the peaceful life and the freedom of their fellow countrymen. You have been lucky to be American veterans.

In addition to President Bush, Secretary Nicholson and your Congressmen and Senators who support you on all accounts, you also have the free world that respects you and are proud to be friends with you.

But our veterans at home should work hard. Our government and the country alike, of course, are appreciative to their contribution to defending our country, and they are taken care of and respected by both the government and the people. On their behalf, however, they together with our fellow countrymen are proud of their basic right to take part in many of the international activities, such as those of the WHOSA global organization watching the health issues for all mankind.

We, in Taiwan, have left no stone unturned in the efforts to prevent the contacting of contagious diseases like SARS and the Bird Flu. Our veterans hospitals have a very high reputation fighting against SARS. However, because of PRCC intervention, our veterans in our country as a whole are still blacked out from the WHOA and the WHA. Assuming a life of peace, democracy and freedom has been a goal of all mankind.

We, in Taiwan, admire our American friends. You have enjoyed all to the fullest extent, but we in Taiwan are still striving against forces to take over Taiwan. My dear friends in the VFW, we are lucky to have this congress with you and we will cherish it in the years to come. The resolution you have passed in the past year has been exposed to my

country, the Republic of China on Taiwan, and it has been very deeply appreciated by both our governments and our overall countrymen as well.

We look forward to your continued friendship by kindly supporting us to take part in global activity like WHO, WHA and the UN. Thanks again. You help us to get more modern defense weapons. Thank you again for inviting me to speak at this Joint Opening Ceremony. I wish you all a successful convention. I salute all of you, my dear friends, and I salute your armed forces. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. HANS SANG: Thank you very much. To express appreciation of our country, the Republic of China, to Commander-in-Chief James Mueller for his friendship and efforts in promoting the relationship between our two countries. I will read the citation.

The citation reads, "Mr. James Mueller, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, has distinguished himself by his outstanding contributions to the promotion of friendly relations and cooperation between the United States of America and the Republic of China.

"In appreciation of his meritorious assistance, Commander-in-Chief James Mueller is presented the Medal of Cloud and Banner with cravat No. 3609, by the Government of the Republic of China, in accordance with Article 11 of the armed Forces Decoration Regulations."

Signed by Chen, Shui-bian, President, Yu, Hai-kun, Premiere, and Li, Jieh, Minister of National Defense. (Applause)

The inscription on the plaque states, "Presented to James Mueller, Commander in Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In appreciation of his outstanding contributions to the enhancement of friendship and cooperation between the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China. Presented by General Kao, Hua-chu, Minister, Veterans Affairs Commission, the Republic of China, August 28, 2006." (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN FURGESS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Perhaps no one else in our organization typifies that type of "let's get it done," attitude than the next person we are about to honor. John Furgess has left an indelible mark upon his department and to all who have come to rely on his knowledge and expertise.

As VFW Commander-in-Chief, John Furgess was unequaled in his unwavering commitment and loyalty to America's veterans. Throughout his year as Commander-in-Chief, John proved to be an aggressive spokesman for the VFW and for all those we serve.

For that, and much more, we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to him. Please join me in honoring John Furgess with the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to John Furgess, Commander-in-Chief, 2004-2005.

"In sincere appreciation and special recognition of his total

commitment and dedication to the highest ideals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and his continuing efforts in support of its programs and purposes. His commitment to 'Celebration of Service' during the 2004-2005 administrative year enabled the Veterans of Foreign Wars to remain a strong advocate for our nation's veterans.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 28th day of August, 2006."

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN FURGESS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FURGESS: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. The Commander-in-Chief has given me two minutes. My comrades and ladies, I have seen Past Commanders-in-Chief stand here at this moment in their life and sort of struggle for the right words to say thank you, and it is a struggle. I would love to tell the story one more time about my friend, Teddy, but I hope you will tell that story for me.

Please remember VFW today, our day, September 29th, the date of this wonderful congressional charter of ours, which traces that history to 1899.

I will stand here this morning in those two minutes and tell you about our wonderful visits from Birmingham to Buffalo, and from Boston to Billings, and from Evansville to Eaton Rapids, but in the interest of time I will only mention visits to Brussels, Bosnia, Beijing, Baghdad and so many others during this wonderful three-year journey, to Hanoi, Chula, Caisson, Falusia and Landstuhl, Walter Reed, Bethesda, life altering visits.

What an honor to serve you. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity and these memories that will last a lifetime. I will close with that wonderful experience of visiting a place I had never been not far from here, Hawthorne, Nevada, one of the great cities that celebrates Armed Forces Day every year, and not every city does, that third Saturday in May. But Hawthorne does.

After a wonderful parade and a banquet at the VFW Post that evening, where they honored five Navy Seals training in those rugged mountains around Hawthorne for their service in Afghanistan. Almost as an afterthought at the banquet, the Master of Ceremonies introduced the beautiful 16-year-old lady, their Voice of Democracy recipient.

My Post, just like yours, on a Saturday night, there was a lot of noise, and she started to speak. She recognized her parents, she recognized her teacher, and she recognized those VFW comrades and ladies, and she said the five reasons we are free as a nation, I will remember it the rest of my life, and that noise became silence. What five reasons? We scratched our head.

This wonderful young lady, those five reasons, I will remember the rest of my life, she said the five reasons we are free as a nation, the United States Army, the United States Navy, the United States Marine Corps, the United States Air Force and the United States Coast Guard. They gave her a standing ovation, and I salute her this morning. Thank you, my comrades. We love you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF 2006 VFW CITIZENSHIP AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is now my honor to introduce Mr. Kenneth E. Behring, the recipient of this year's VFW Citizenship Award.

Ken was born in Illinois but grew up on a farm in rural Wisconsin. His first job was at a Chinese factory at age 14. Then he sold used cars, then he immersed himself into real estate and built condos and golf course communities. He is also the former owner of the Seattle Seahawks.

The Citizenship Award criteria requires a significant contribution to the spirit of service and a dedication to the nation that inspires all of us to be better citizens.

Ken donated \$100 million to the Smithsonian Institute that allowed, among many other worthwhile projects, the creation of a new exhibit in the American History Museum entitled "The Price of Freedom – Americans at War."

Because of Ken, millions of visitors to the Smithsonian now have a greater appreciation for the service and sacrifice of America's veterans.

Ken also established a non-profit Wheelchair Foundation that has donated and delivered more than a half-million wheelchairs to people in need throughout the world. And because of Ken, the lives of hundreds of thousands of people have been improved through the simple power of mobility.

On behalf of the entire organization, I am proud to present him with the 2006 VFW Citizenship Award. Please welcome Mr. Ken Behring. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "James E. VanZandt Citizenship Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Kenneth E. Behring.

"In recognition of his outstanding humanitarian efforts worldwide to improve the lives of countless people through his many philanthropic foundations.

"Ken Behring's generosity touches lives in ways that leave a lasting impact. From his Wheelchair Foundation, which is providing mobility to thousands around the globe, to his unprecedented pledge of \$100 million to the Smithsonian Museum of American History, he has demonstrated extraordinary citizenship. He is truly the personification of a great American and this is in keeping with the highest traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 28th day of August, 2006. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

This also comes with a \$5,000 honorarium, which Mr. Behring has directed us to donate to the Prescott VA Medical Center for the work of the VA. (Applause)

RESPONSE – MR. KENNETH BEHRING

MR. BEHRING: Thank you. What a great honor it is to be here today and to receive this medal of recognition. In this great country, this is what

can happen. I was born very poor. I was born here in the United States. I was given the opportunity to do whatever my abilities would let me do, so I started to pursue what they call the American dream of making money and getting possessions.

Most of my life, that is the path I went. I had great success at it, and as I was climbing the mountain, you acquire possessions. I had a football team. I have had banks. I have developed communities, golf course communities, retirement communities. I have built museums. I had yachts. I have had airplanes. I have had the homes. I have been fortunate to visit with many of the kings and presidents of different countries.

But when I finally one day realized I was at the top of the mountain and it was barren, I had achieved financial success, but there was more in life than there are possessions of monetary means. So somebody told me there is a word called "purpose", which means that you will do something for fellow human beings that makes their lives better, that you actually use your heart, your hands, all the ability that you have to try to give them a better life without looking for anything in return.

I had always given money to whatever came up, and probably trying to take the guilt away. But I had gotten to the point in my life where there was something still missing. So in trying to do that, I went around the world trying to give things. I took medical supplies, I took books to Africa. I tried to do whatever somebody offered to me. But by accident, somebody asked me to take some wheelchairs to Vietnam, and many of you have been in Vietnam.

So, I arrived about seven years ago in Hanoi with the Communist government with a load of wheelchairs I wanted to give away to some of the disabled people there. The government gave me a tremendously hard time, but I finally found a hospital that helped me get a couple of chairs in. When we went, he said, "I have got a little girl that we would like to go and give one of these wheelchairs to."

So, I went with him and we went by taxi, and then we went by bicycle, and finally down a dirt road pushing a wheelchair and gathering people as we were going trying to get to this little girl's house. When we got there, we went inside, and it was a very gloom little hut. This little eight-year-old girl was laying on a pillow of rags in the corner of the room.

She had been there from the time that she was born. Her legs were badly deformed. She had never been able to walk or move. Her parents were nice, and I had the doctor with me that could translate. They gave me one of those little chairs that is for a person a third of my size, and they gave me a cup of tea, and I looked out and it was open sewer running. I then knew probably how she became so disabled.

Anyways, she was scared to death. She had lived on that pile of rags and had one dish of rice every day. I picked her up and I put her in the wheelchair, and I had lollipops. I tried to quiet her crying, but she kept on crying. But I helped her outside and I put her hands on the wheel, and by that time there was a big crowd gathered, and little by little I tried to show with her hands how to move those wheels on the wheelchair. It took her a little bit.

Then I walked a couple of steps away and she put her hands just the way I had shown her and she moved that wheelchair, and when she moved

that wheelchair she looked up at me with her eyes, and she had a smile from here to here. We had given that girl mobility, we had given her hope, we had given her dignity. In a matter of a minute, you can change a person's life, and in that same moment I think I found purpose.

As he said, since that time I have traveled to 150 countries and we have given away about 550,000 wheelchairs, but along the way, I also found that there are many other things, and one of the things is water. We are now trying to purify water. We have systems that will go to all these countries. Water is causing more disease and water is something that we can give to people throughout the world and let them have better health. People die from diarrhea. They can't dehydrate, so they die. Millions of babies die every year. So, that has been part of my purpose.

The next thing in purpose was with the Smithsonian. I went there and I wanted to help the American History Museum. When we were together, one of the most important things I thought is freedom. We are free. We have to remain free. Why are we free? So, that's when we came up with the "Price of Freedom", which takes us through every war that we have had.

It gives examples of all the soldiers, the sacrifices they made, where they came from. If you have not been there, I sure hope that you will visit the American History Museum right on the mall the "Price of Freedom", because I think it demonstrates that we are free and we have to remain free.

One more thing, with the wheelchairs, I have been in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Lebanon. We are in a global conflict. I mean, we are in something that we have never been before. We don't know who the enemy is. They are very smart. They are trying to break us financially as much as killing us with guns.

As we came in here today, you noted the lines that you have to go through. When you multiply this out, this is the war they are attacking us with, is taking our freedom away. Our country is only good because we are free, and we have to retain these freedoms. We have to get to the point where we don't have to be scared to go on an airplane or to do anything else.

So, we have to continue to battle this group of people who wants to take over the world and make all of you think the way they do, and the way they think is not the way I think we all want to think. May God bless each and every one of you with health and friendship. It is because of you that we are free, and that is the greatest country in the world, the United States of America. Thank you. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF THE VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER – KATE SIEGEL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Over the past 59 years, the Voice of Democracy contest has enabled high school students from across the country and overseas to think, write and speak out for freedom and democracy.

Today, these students compete for \$146,000 in national scholarships, not to mention the more than \$2.5 million in awards and scholarships given annually by Posts, Districts, Departments and their Ladies Auxiliaries.

These VFW scholarships enable many young Americans to continue

their education in colleges and universities of their choice.

We are pleased to have with us today the 2006 first-place national winner in the Voice of Democracy contest, Kate Siegel.

Kate was a junior at Harvard-Westlake School in Los Angeles, California, and was sponsored by VFW Post 2805 and Ladies Auxiliary in Canoga Park when she entered the contest.

Here to present her award-winning essay, "How I Demonstrate My Freedom," the 2006 first-place National Voice of Democracy winner and the recipient of the \$30,000 T.C. Selman Memorial Scholarship, Kate Siegel.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER

MS. KATE SIEGEL: Good morning. Before I begin, I would just like to thank all of you and the entire VFW organization, because winning this scholarship has been a truly incredible experience, and after making many great friends within the VFW organization, I have decided to create a nationwide teen charity benefiting the VFW National Home for Children. (Applause)

So, if any of you know of a youth or teen auxiliary group at your Post or District that might be interested in joining our efforts, if you would please see me at the program booth there after this session, I would really appreciate it. Thank you.

"How I Demonstrate My Freedom."

As the hot, desert sun streaks the Western sky outside her window with vibrant shades of orange and gold, a young girl rushes to get ready for school. She throws a pair of pink goggles in her backpack, excited that today she will be trying out for the swim team. She is 12 years old and bursting with optimism: Just starting seventh grade and ready to take on the world.

Racing down the steps to the kitchen, she is surprised to hear the television blaring. She and her little brother are never allowed to watch TV during breakfast. Once in the kitchen, she is alarmed by the mood there. Her parents sit transfixed, staring at the TV. Even her little brother is silent. There is no food on the table, no wonderful aroma of bacon and eggs frying on the stove. The atmosphere in the kitchen is very dark and it frightens her. The television screen is filled with the image of a plane that has crashed into a skyscraper.

Quickly she learns the truth. There has been an act of terrorism, the two towers of the World Trade Center are on fire, and her Uncle Mike is in one of the buildings. During the next half hour, she watches in horror as both towers collapse; there is no word from her Uncle Mike. She is forced to grow up in an instant; her childhood the casualty of a heartless enemy waging war on America.

There she sits with her family, a family held captive in their own home by the loop of violence playing endlessly on the TV screen. Finally, her father stands up and abruptly turns off the news that seems to have paralyzed his family. He insists that she and her brother go to school. When she protests, he tells her that Americans cannot let terrorists interrupt their way of life, that they want us to hide, to live a life of fear; to be captive in our own homes.

She does go to school that morning and listens to President Bush's speech. He states, "Freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faceless coward and freedom will be defended." She begins to realize that we are now a country at war, and that life will never be the same.

That young girl is the face of my generation, the girl next door, the boy riding his bike down the street.

As the baby boomer generation defines itself by the question, "Where were you when President Kennedy was shot?", my generation is defined by an early morning in September and the question, "Where were you when the planes struck the World Trade Center?" I, too, went to school that fateful day in September. Now, four years later, I am 16, and my generation has entered adolescence. Make no mistake, though, we still remain doggedly optimistic.

My generation knows and feels the difference between the innocent, safe time before 9/11 and now. In fact, when I read that the topic of this essay was "How I Demonstrate my Freedom", it struck me that before September 11th most of my generation had taken our freedom for granted. After 9/11, we understood that our freedom and every way of life were under attack. We knew that we had to take action to demonstrate our freedom and exercise, protect and defend our rights.

To exercise, protect and defend. That is how my generation will demonstrate our freedom.

Although we are too young to vote or serve in the military, there are many avenues that my generation can use to demonstrate our freedom and show the world the ideal of a free society. For example, even though I can't enlist, I can support the brave men and women on the front lines of the War on Terror. I can help organize neighbor drives to buy body armor for our troops. At the same time, I write letters to Congress arguing that the government, not family bake sales, should be responsible for paying for this life-saving armor.

Even though my generation is too young to exercise the cherished right to vote, we demonstrate our freedom by campaigning for those candidates who will defend our freedom and way of life, for those candidates who will guarantee lifetime medical and pension benefits for our veterans who have sacrificed so much in the name of freedom.

Exercise, protect and defend. Even though we take the terror alerts seriously, my generation demonstrates our freedom by not caving in with the announcement of each new alert. When there is a threat, we still go to malls, we go to movies and we go to football games, to church and to synagogue; we travel by airplane, by subway. We don't let the threats stop our lives.

As my generation prepares to assume the mantle of leadership and the burden of fighting and defending our country, we must make sure that the young girl who woke up happy that September 11th morning remains optimistic, confident that her Uncle Mike did not die in vain. We will exercise, protect and defend our freedom in the name of those who no longer can: For all of our Uncle Mikes, for all of the brave men and women who have sacrificed their lives fighting for our precious freedom. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS TO 2006 ALL-AMERICAN COMMANDERS

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: One of the most prestigious awards earned as a Commander in the Veterans of Foreign Wars is to be named a member of the All-American Commanders team. Now, Commander-in-Chief James Mueller, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Gary Kurpius and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief George Lisicki will present All-American Commanders Awards to this elite group of Commanders.

	Alabama	
Ben K. McKinnon	-	Post 668
George Jones	-	Post 6073
John w. Hancock	-	Department of Alabama
	Arizona	
James J. Stark	-	Post 1433
Timothy M. Borland	-	Post 9972
Darrel G. Moore	-	Department of Arizona
	Arkansas	
Odell Stricklin	-	Post 9095
	California	
Neil B. Black	-	Post 888
Leonard J. Hodson	-	Post 1985
Joseph w. Johnson	-	Post 4647
Neland H. Ikel	-	Post 8254
Stephen D. Cannizzaro	-	Post 11294
David E. Alvarado	-	Post 12034
Dean J. Lee	-	District 17
Shirley M. Shaw	-	Department of California
	Colorado	
Edward J. O'Leary	-	Post 859
Laura D. Stone	-	Post 3917
Gregory P. Wareko	-	District 5
Darrell L. Anderson	-	Department of Colorado
	Connecticut	
Dominic J. Romano	-	Post 7330
Richard G. D'Federico, Jr.	-	District 5
Robert P. Tuzzoli	-	Department of Connecticut
	Delaware	
Mark M. Newman	-	Department of Delaware
	District of Columbia	
Troy E. Gatling	-	Department of District of Columbia
	Europe	
Robert J. Mulligan	-	Post 27
	Florida	
Harry L. Seiler	-	Post 7909
John W. Thornburg	-	Post 8083
Joseph F. Schott	-	Post 10084
Harvey J. Wilcox	-	Post 10167
William J. Russell	-	District 10

Robert Shepherd	-	Department of Florida
	Georgia	
Al J. Lipheart	-	Post 12002
Louis G. Graziano, II	-	District 10 and Post 7778
Manis V. Long	-	Department of Georgia
	Hawaii	
George F. Barlett	-	Post 10154
Samuel H. Araki	-	Department of Hawaii
	Idaho	
Patrick D. Teegue	-	Department of Idaho
	Illinois	
Warren D. Stout	-	Post 1308
	Indiana	
Darrel L. Knight	-	Post 972
Bobby D. Waricks	-	Post 1257
Walter J. D'Ambrosio	-	Post 5864
Arnold L. Marion	-	Post 6606
Nicholas A. Flack	-	District 7
	Kentucky	
Ronnie Dickerson	-	Department of Kentucky
	Louisiana	
Stanley E. Vaughn	-	District 5
Thomas J. Kyjak	-	Department of Louisiana
	Maryland	
James F. Hopkins	-	Post 6506
John J. Gloss	-	Post 9083
Paul W. Molinaro	-	District 14
Donald H. Cunningham, Jr.	-	Department of Maryland
	Massachusetts	
Roger E. Leger	-	Post 1524
	Minnesota	
Leon R. Ulferts	-	Post 3915
	Mississippi	
Ivan W. Bangs	-	Post 2539
Charles E. Fiske	-	Post 4272
Charles W. Singleterry	-	District 2
Johnny Rodriguez	-	District 3
Donald L. Veruchi	-	Department of Mississippi
	Missouri	
Robert J. Eckerlee	-	Post 7356
Philip M. Duncan	-	District 3
Phillip A. Pippins	-	District 8
James C. Holmes	-	Department of Missouri
	Montana	
James F.A. McGill	-	Department of Montana
	Nebraska	
Robert S. Griffith	-	Post 2503
Richard E. Morrison	-	Department of Nebraska
	Nevada	

George Dennis	-	Post 8250
Thomas A. Vick	-	Post 10054
Stephen P. Gibbs	-	Department of Nevada
	New Jersey	
Joseph Bambach	-	Post 10129
William R. Gryman	-	Department of New Jersey
	New Mexico	
George W. Brown	-	Post 401
	New York	
Thomas Ronayne	-	Post 1469
	North Carolina	
Ewell H. Griggs	-	Post 2972
Menson Bird	-	Post 3074
David A. Seltzer	-	Post 9408
Roy C. Meares	-	Department of North Carolina
	Ohio	
Michael G. Wilson	-	Post 7570
	Oklahoma	
James K. Morgan	-	Post 1193
Robert D. Tryan	-	Post 5263
Frank G. Zanbrano	-	District 14
	Pacific Areas	
Kenneth P. Swerzewski	-	District 3
James Hudson	-	Post 10033
Ronald D. Teets	-	Department of Pacific Areas
	Pennsylvania	
Cecil K. Dennis	-	Post 5958
Edward A. Deesroth	-	District 18
Thomas M. Hanzes	-	District 28
	Rhode Island	
Allen C. Wagonblott, Jr.	-	Department of Rhode Island
	South Carolina	
John Marker	-	Post 9138
	South Dakota	
Robert B. Kerland	-	Post 1273
Gary Kanudeson	-	Department of South Dakota
	Tennessee	
Jimmy Lee Taylor	-	Post 10904
Ronald N. Cameron	-	Department of Tennessee
	Texas	
Edward C. Torres	-	Post 4815
Jacob Pimentell	-	Post 4006
Kirk C. Lyder	-	Post 6008
Harry C. Munn	-	District 29
Duane E. Shriver	-	Department of Texas
	Utah	
Dennis L. Pareezek	-	Department of Utah
	Vermont	
Vito S. DeMarco	-	Department of Vermont
	Virginia	

Harry F. Sharp, II	-	Post 392
James K. Martin	-	Post 1503
Daniel D. Boyer	-	Department of Virginia
	Washington	
David C. Olmsted	-	Post 1927
William W. Poynter	-	Post 2224
Randy E. Hahn	-	District 6
	West Virginia	
William J. D’Fazio	-	Post 573
	Wisconsin	
Earl D. Banks	-	Department of Wisconsin

Let’s give a round of applause for all of these All-American Posts, Districts and Department Commanders. (Applause)

MIP CONVERSION CONTEST WINNERS

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: In addition to the All-American Commanders, we have the three winners of the MIP Conversion Contest. They are David Norris, Post 52, Department of California; John Lewis, Post 4061, Department of Colorado; and James Mauck, Post 2601, Department of Colorado. (Applause)

Comrades and Sisters, after we have our guest speaker in about another 35 minutes, please do not leave the hall because we do have other speakers after the guest speaker. We will have Sergeant R. Lee Ermey to speak on the Unmet Needs, and we have some other awards to give. So, please, remain in your seats after the guest speaker speaks. Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF THE 2006 VFW ARMED FORCES AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is now my honor to introduce Retired Army Lieutenant General Hal Moore, the recipient of this year’s VFW Armed Forces Award.

General Moore graduated from West Point and was commissioned in 1945. He served in the Korean War as a Company Commander and Regimental Operations Officer for the 7th Infantry Division.

He served in Vietnam as a Battalion and Brigade Commander of the 1st Cavalry Division, then later as the Commanding General of the 7th Infantry in South Korea, and Commanding General of Fort Ord, and then as the Army’s Deputy Chief of Staff for personnel in the Pentagon.

He retired in 1977 after 32 years of service with a list of awards and decorations a mile long. But the awards that are most cherished by him are his Master Paratrooper Badge, his Distinguished Service Cross, his two awards of the Combat Infantryman’s Badge, and his appointment to the Honorary Grade of Rifle Platoon Sergeant by the Sergeants Major of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

I hope everyone here has read the General’s book, “We Were Soldiers Once and Young,” which he co-authored with former UPI Reporter Joe Galloway.

The book provides detailed accounts of the bravery of his troops in the first major battle of the Vietnam War, but it also validates the General’s

leadership under fire, his dedication to mission, and his absolute loyalty to his troops.

The General and his late wife, Julie, made a difference in the lives of his troops and their families, both on and off the battlefield. Julie forever changed the way the government sends death notices to next of kin. No more Western Union telegrams delivered by taxicab drivers.

As close friend Joe Galloway would later write in an editorial about her life, she raised so much hell with the Pentagon that the policy was changed within two weeks and a new one was instituted that required an officer and a chaplain to personally deliver the news.

This total commitment to the troops and to their families forged a tight bond many years ago, but one that remains just as close if you would ever attend one of their annual reunions.

Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the recipient of this year's Armed Forces Award, Lieutenant General Hal Moore.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Armed Forces Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Lieutenant General Harold 'Hal' Moore.

"In special recognition of outstanding service and devotion to our nation's ideals as displayed through a long and distinguished military career as well as his dedication to lecturing and teaching the lessons learned from the battle in the Ia Drang Valley, Republic of South Vietnam.

"His remarkable achievements as a combat leader and author are well-known but are surpassed only by what his greatest legacy will prove to be and that is his willingness to give so much of his life to teaching young military officers and soldiers. General Moore has served his nation with integrity and devotion, and is in keeping with the highest traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 28th day of August, 2006. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

General Moore is donating the honorarium that accompanies this award to the Ia Drang Scholarship Fund in memory of his wife, Julie Moore. (Applause)

RESPONSE – LIEUTENANT GENERAL HAROLD MOORE

LIEUTENANT GENERAL MOORE: Years ago, I visited the General Eisenhower Memorial at his boyhood home in Kansas. On his tomb is inscribed the following words, which he spoke in his Guild Hall address in London on June 12, 1945, 30 days after VE day and the surrender of the axis powers: "Humility might always be the portion of any man who receives a claim earned in the blood of his followers, and the sacrifices of his friends." And so is it for me, I accept this rare prestigious award with sincere gratitude.

It is a great honor from this great veterans organization and most especially I thank those who helped me along the way over the years. My beloved wife, Julie, and the Sergeants, the common commissioned officers who taught me so much about soldiers and kept me out of trouble as I went

up through the grades. All those old wise Captains, Majors, Colonels, who helped me along, without all their support and all their help and all their loyalty and gratis, I would be nothing.

John Donne, the author of the famous book "For Whom the Bells Toll", wrote, "No man is an island. We are all part of the main, so never ask for whom the bells toll, it tolls for thee."

I served many, not an island, and I had all kinds of help along the way. For example, here today with us is Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Crandall, Huey Company Commander who saved me in the Ia Drang Valley, and along with him Major Ed Freeman, holder of the Medal of Honor for his actions in the Ia Drang Valley as a Huey pilot.

I will tell you that I have recommended over two years ago Lieutenant Colonel Crandall for the Congressional Medal of Honor. I have recently been informed that the Secretary of the Army has approved this and has sent it on higher.

With us today also is a good friend of mine, who is a warrant officer, Air Rocket Artillery in Vietnam, and he helped support us also in many battles, Chip Parker.

Finally, we exercise great freedoms in this country, and two of the greatest freedoms that we exercise are freedom of the press and freedom of speech. Today, I have probably the most outstanding representative of the military journalists of the world standing behind me, the co-author of my book, and world-famous columnist, journalist, Joe Galloway. (Applause)

Finally, the wives, the spouses, we men would be nothing without our spouses standing behind us as we go off to war. Finally, I will say I am overwhelmed in all humility and respect to be invited to be here among you supremely valiant American warriors. This is truly a paramount unique experience for me, which I shall treasure for the little time that I have left in the game. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you. We will take about a 20-minute break, and then the guest speaker will be arriving to address us. Thank you.

. . . Recess. . .

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE RICHARD CHENEY, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is now my honor to welcome a former six-term Congressman, a former White House Chief of Staff, a former Secretary of Defense, a former corporate executive, and now the Vice-President of the United States of America, Dick Cheney. Please join me in giving him a very warm welcome. (Applause)

REMARKS BY VICE-PRESIDENT CHENEY

VICE-PRESIDENT CHENEY: Thank you. Thank you very much, and good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for the warm welcome. It is good to be in Reno, Nevada, and to be the guest of one of the nation's finest organizations, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Let me thank Jim Mueller for his kind words this morning, as well as for the

invitation to join all of you today.

I also want to thank Sandy Germany and the Ladies Auxiliary for the fine work they do every day on behalf of our veterans and military families, Bob Wallace, of course, the Executive Director of your National Offices, and we appreciate his devoted service to America's veterans in our nation's capital. Let me also be among the first to congratulate VFW's incoming Commander-in-Chief, Gary Kurpius, of Anchorage, Alaska, and the next President of the Ladies Auxiliary, Linda Meader of Concorde, New Hampshire. I know Gary and Linda will do a fine job in the years ahead.

It has been my good fortune to attend a number of VFW Conventions over the years, and I have been looking forward to joining all of you today. By its very name, this organization commands the respect of our entire nation. As members of the VFW, you know what it means to hear the call to duty, the care of responsibility, to set aside all motions of comfort, convenience and safety in order to defend the United States.

Last month I participated in an Armistice Day ceremony at the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington. I was struck by the simple words of one of our men who served in what has been called the forgotten war. "In spite of it all," he said, "I was glad to have served my country and I have never heard Korean War veterans complain. In fact, if we had to do it all over again, we would."

There could be no more eloquent testimony to the character of our country than those words from a veteran. Whatever it is about America that has produced such privileged citizens in every generation, it is the best quality we have. Freedom is not free, and all of us are deep in the debt of the men and women who got out and paid the price for our liberty.

Military service forms habits and commitments, that has for a lifetime, and that's why we always see veterans doing more than their full share on behalf of the country. Each year VFW members give more than 13 million hours in volunteer time educating and inspiring young people, helping military families, enhancing the civic life of the communities all across the nation.

One year ago, Hurricane Katrina hit shore and soon afterwards members of the VFW were involved in the relief effort, contributing hundreds of thousands of dollars to fellow citizens in need. We would not be the nation we are today were it not for the ethics of teamwork, generosity, active citizenship and patriotism that defined the VFW. So, I count it a privilege to be in your company, and I bring personal greetings from the President of the United States, George W. Bush.

Something tells me we have got more than a few veterans here today from the President's home state of Texas (Applause), and maybe a small contingent from my home state of Wyoming. (Applause) I remind you what I used to tell colleagues when I was in Congress and served as the lone Congressman from Wyoming. I said it was a small delegation, but it is all quality.

Both the President and I have many friends in the room this morning. We are proud to have strong ties to the rank and file and the leadership of the VFW, and when we came to office five and a half years ago we were determined to enhance the respect shown by our government to veterans and to demonstrate that respect not just in words, but in resources.

By respecting and caring for our veterans, we show our values as a nation. More than that, we honor solemn commitments that have been made to those who wore the uniform. A veteran who deals with the federal government should be treated as one who has paid into the system the hard way, and should never be made to feel that someone is doing him or her a favor.

I am happy to report that under the administration of George Bush we have increased funds for all VA administered programs by 75 percent. In fact, President Bush presided over a greater increase for the VA in the first four years of his administration than was seen in the entire eight years of the prior administration.

In addition, the President's budget for next fiscal year calls for \$34.3 billion for veterans health care, an amount almost 70 percent greater than the budget when we took over. As part of our commitment for good and timely care of our veterans, we are modernizing and expanding many VA facilities, including brand new veterans hospitals in Orlando, Denver and Las Vegas.

Our administration has also worked with veterans groups to meet the special needs of veterans, and this President was the first in more than a hundred years to sign concurrent receipt legislation. As a nation born in revolution and defended for two centuries by the courage of unselfish men and women, America looks with reverence to our fallen and missing heroes, and to the flag under which they served.

Millions of Americans recall the face and the name of someone who never lived to be called a veteran. Departed service members have a special place in our nation's cemeteries and are taken to rest with national honors. Recent appearance of protesters at military funerals mocking the dead and insulting their families in their aura of grief are an outrage.

In response and with your active support, Congress passed the "Respect for America's Fallen Heroes Act," and President Bush was pleased to sign it into law. The VFW remains in the forefront of the efforts to learn the full truth about your fellow Americans whose fate is yet undetermined. We have seen some progress in this area, but nothing close to enough. This nation will not give up until we have reached a full accounting for every last American prisoner of war and soldier missing in action.

I also want to thank the VFW for your unrelenting dedication to protection of the American Flag and the right of our children and grandchildren to speak every word of the Pledge of Allegiance. Your annual convention comes yet again in a time of war. At this very hour, American soldiers, Marines, sailors, airmen and Coast Guardsmen are on vital missions to defend the innocent, confront the violent and honor the commitments of the United States. They reflect enormous credit on this nation, and I know they appreciate the unwavering concern and support and prayers of the VFW.

In just two weeks, the calendar will read again September 11 and our minds will go back to that day five years ago when enemies struck our country with the action of stealth and murder. The men and women on duty in the war on terror are serving the highest ideals of the nation, our belief in freedom and justice, equality and dignity of the individual. And they are serving vital security interests of America and the civilized world.

There is no denying that the work is difficult and that there is a great deal to be done, yet we can harbor no illusions about the nature of the enemy we are fighting or the ambitions they seek to achieve. This enemy wears no uniform, has no regard for the rules of warfare, and is unconstrained by any standard of decency or morality.

They plot and plan in secret, target the defenseless, and rejoice at the death of innocent unsuspected human beings. This enemy has a set of beliefs, and we saw the expression of those beliefs in the rule of the Taliban. They seek to impose a dictatorship of fear under which every man, woman and child lives in total obedience to a narrow and hateful etiology. This etiology rejects tolerance, denies freedom of conscience and demands that women be pushed to the margins of our society.

Such beliefs can be imposed only through force and intimidation, so those who refuse to bow to the tyrants will be brutalized or killed, and no person or group is exempt. This enemy also has a set of clear objectives. The terrorists want to end all American and Western influence in the Middle East. Their goal in that region is to seize control of the country so they have a base from which to launch attacks and to wage war against governments that do not meet their demands.

The terrorists believe that by controlling one country they will be able to target and overthrow other governments in the region, and ultimately to establish a totalitarian empire that encompasses the region from Spain across North Africa through the Middle East and South Asia, all the way around to Indonesia. They had made clear as well their ultimate ambitions to arm themselves with chemical, biological and even nuclear weapons to destroy Israel, to intimidate all Western countries and to cause mass death in the United States.

Some might look at these ambitions and wave them off as extreme and mad. Well, these ambitions are extreme and they are mad, they are also real, and we must not wave them off. We must take them seriously. We must oppose them, and we must defeat them.

Over the last several decades, Americans have seen how the terrorists pursue their objectives. Something of a pattern developed that was plain to see. To put it in blunt terms, the terrorists would hit us but we did not hit back hard enough. For many years prior to 9/11, we treated terror attacks against Americans as isolated incidents and answered, if at all, on an ad hoc basis, never in a systematic way.

Even after a strike inside our own country in 1993, bombing the World Trade Center, there was a tendency to treat terrorist attacks as individual criminal acts to be handled primarily through law enforcement. The man who perpetrated that first attack in New York was tracked down, arrested, convicted and sent off to prison.

Yet behind that one man was a growing network with operatives inside and outside the United States waging war against our country. For us that war started on 9/11. For them, it started years before. They killed 241 servicemen in Beirut in 1983. Then there was the World Trade Center attack in 1993, and after that the murders of the Saudi Arabian National Guard facility in Riyadh in 1995.

Simultaneous bombing of American Embassies in Kenya, Tanzania in 1998, and the attack on the USS Cole in 2000. With each attack, the

terrorists grew more confident in believing they could strike America without paying a price. So they continued to wage those attacks making the world less safe and eventually striking here in the homeland on September 11th.

Against this kind of determined organized ruthless enemy, America required a new strategy, not merely to prosecute a series of crimes but to fight and win a global campaign against the terror network. If I may quote Franklin Roosevelt, the President under whom many of you served and fought, and the words he used to describe fighting the Nazis.

"Modern warfare against treacherous enemies," he said, "is a dirty business. We don't like it, we didn't want to get in it, but we are in it and we are going to fight it with everything we have got." First, we are absolutely going to prevent attacks before they occur so we are on the offensive against the terrorists.

At home and with coalition partners abroad, we have broken up terrorist cells, tracked down terrorist operatives and put heavy pressure on their ability to organize and plan attacks. The work is hard, perilous and ongoing, but we have made tremendous progress against an enemy that dwells in the shadows.

Second, we are determined to deny safe haven to the terrorists. Since the day our country was attacked, we have applied the Bush doctrine: "Any person or government that supports, protects or harbors terrorists is complicit in the murder of the innocent and will be held to account."

Third, we are working to halt the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to keep those weapons out of the hands of killers. In the post-9/11 world, we have to confront such dangers before they fully materialize. President Bush has put it very well. "Terrorists and terrorist states do not reveal these threats with fair notice in formal declarations and responding to such enemies only after an attack is not self-defense, it is suicide."

Fourth, we are determined to deny the terrorists control of any nation which they would use as a home base and staging ground for terrorist attacks on others. That's why we continue to fight the Taliban remnants and al-Qaida forces in Afghanistan. That's why we are working with President Musharraf to oppose and isolate the terrorist element in Pakistan, and that's why we are fighting the remnants of Sadaam Hussein's regime and terrorists in Iraq.

Now some have suggested that by liberating Iraq from Sadaam Hussein, we simply stirred up a hornet's nest. They overlook a fundamental fact. We were not in Iraq on September 11, 2001, and the terrorists hit us anyway. As President Bush has said, "The hatred of radicals existed before Iraq was an issue, and it will exist after Iraq is no longer an excuse."

The terrorists regard the entire world as their battlefield. That is why al-Quada has operatives in Iraq today, and they believe they can frighten and intimidate America into a policy of retreat. I realize as well that some in our own country claim retreat from Iraq would satisfy the appetite of the terrorists and get them to leave us alone. But the exact opposite is true.

Time and again, over the last generation, the terrorists have targeted nations whose behavior they believe they can change through violence. In fact, such retreat would convince the terrorists once again that free nations

will change our policy, forsake our friends and abandon our interests whenever we are confronted with violence and blackmail.

They would simply draw up another set of demands and instruct Americans to act as they direct or to face other murders. Our precipitous withdrawal from Iraq would be a victory for terrorists and an indication to further violence against free nations, and a ruinous blow to the future security of the United States.

In our own country, we take democratic values seriously, and so we always have a vigorous debate on the issues. That's part of the greatness of America, and we wouldn't have it any other way. But there is a difference between healthy debate and self-defeating pessimism. We have only two options in Iraq, victory or defeat. This nation will not pursue a policy of retreat. We will complete the mission, we will get it done right, and then we will return with honor.

Before we took down Sadaam Hussein's regime, President Bush said the United States would not permit another dictatorship to rise on the ruins of the older one. Today, Iraq has the most progressive constitution and the strongest democratic mandate in the entire Arab world. Iraq's political leaders are steady and courageous, and the citizens, police and soldiers, have stepped forward as active participants in guardians of the new democracy, running for office, speaking out, voting in the millions, and sacrificing for the future of their country.

Iraqi citizens are doing all of this despite threats from terrorists, who offer no political agenda for Iraq's future and way to campaign of mass slaughter against the Iraqi people themselves, the vast majority of whom are fellow Arabs and fellow Muslims. As Prime Minister Maliki said on his recent visit to Washington, his country has gone from a one-party state ruled by a small elite, to a multi-party system where politics is the domain of every citizen and parties compete at all levels, and Iraqis have firmly chosen hope over fear, liberty over depression, dignity over submission, and democracy over dictatorship.

America is helping Iraq on this journey, because we are a nation that keeps its word, and we know that when men and women are given the power to determine their own destiny, the etiologies of violence and resentment will lose their appeal and nations will turn their consideration to the pursuit of peace.

By standing with our friends, we are making a better day possible in the broader sense. By supporting democracy, we serve both the ideals and the security of our nation, and the brave Americans on duty in this war can be proud of their service for the rest of their lives. Our forces remain absolutely relentless in their duties and they are carrying out their missions with the skill and the honor that we expect of them.

I think of the ones who put on heavy gear and work 12 to 14-hour shifts in the desert. Every day they are striking the enemy, conducting raids, training Iraqi forces, countering attacks, seizing weapons, capturing killers, and will continue to train the Iraqi forces so they can defend their own country and make it a source of stability in a troubled part of the region.

When it comes to our own troop levels, the President will listen to the recommendations of the commands on the ground, and he will make the call based on what is needed for victory, not according to the polls and not

by artificial time lines set by politicians in Washington, D.C.

Recently, one of our great allies, Prime Minister Tony Blair, said that we are never going to succeed unless we understand the terrorists are going to fight hard, and we are learning as previous generations learned, that wartime conditions are a first test of military skill and of national will.

This is especially true in the war on terror. Five years ago, President Bush told Congress and the country that the path ahead will be difficult, that we were heading into a long struggle, and unlike any we have known. All of this has come to pass. At the same time, we must realize this is a multi-front war requiring every element of our national power.

Those of us in positions of responsibility must do all we can to figure out the intentions of an enemy that likely has combatants inside the United States. We live in a free and open society, and the terrorists want to use those very advantageous against us, and so we have an urgent duty to learn who they are, what they are doing, and to stop them before they can do it.

To this end and the days following 9/11, the President authorized the National Security Agency to intercept a certain category of terrorist links international communications. On occasion, you will hear this called a domestic surveillance program. This is more than a misnomer, it is a flat-out falsehood.

We are talking about international communications, one end of which we believe or have reason to believe is related to the al-Quada or to terrorist networks. It is hard to think of any category of information that would be more important for the safety and security of the United States.

The authorization the President made after September 11th helped to address that problem in a manner that is fully consistent under the Constitution and consistent with the legal authority of the President and the civil liberties of the American people. The activities conducted under this authorization have helped to detect and prevent possible terrorist attacks against the American people.

A recent ruling by a federal judge ordering an end to this program is just dead wrong. We are confident that it will be reversed on appeal. If you will recall, the 9/11 Commission focused criticism on the nation's inability to uncover links between terrorists at home and terrorists overseas.

The term that is used is connecting the dots, and the fact is that the one small piece of data might very well make it possible to save thousands of lives, and the very important question today is whether on five years reflection we have learned all the lessons of September 11th.

In the decade prior to those attacks, our country spent more than \$2 trillion on national security. Yet, on 9/11, we lost nearly 3,000 Americans at the hands of 19 men armed with box cutters and airline tickets. In the case of al-Qaida, we are not dealing with large armies we can track or uniforms we can see, or men with territory of their own to defend.

Their preferred tactic, which they boldly proclaim, is to slip into the country, to blend in among the innocent and to kill without mercy and without restraint. They have intelligence and counter-intelligent operations of their own. They take their orders from overseas. They are using the most sophisticated communications technology they get their hands on.

Since 9/11, they have successfully carried out attacks from Casablanca, Japardo, Barbosa, Bali, Riyadh, Baghdad, Istanbul, Madrid, London,

Bombay and elsewhere. Here in the U.S., we have not had another 9/11. No one can guarantee that we won't be struck again.

But to have come this far without another attack is no accident. We have been protected by sound policy decisions by the President, by decisive actions at home and abroad and around-the-clock efforts on the part of our people in the armed forces, law enforcement, intelligence and homeland security.

The President of the United States regularly makes decisions based on the intelligence briefings that he receives. The information in those briefings is critical to assessing risk and to allocating security assets inside the homeland as well as overseas.

Throughout our military intelligence has a daily, indeed, hourly influence on the movement of ships, fighter and bomber missions and orders given to those whose commands the tip of the spear. Gathering the best information, getting it into the hands of the war fighter, makes all the difference for safety of our forces and the security of the nation.

Members of the VFW, I want each one of you to know the President will not relent in the effort to track the enemies of the United States with every legitimate tool at his command. The enemy that struck on 9/11 is weakened and fractured. It is still lethal; it is still desperately trying to hit us again.

They hate us, they hate our country, and they hate the liberties for which we stand. This is not a war we can win on the defensive. Either we are serious about this fight or we are not. The enemies of America need to know we are serious and we will not let down our guard.

Ladies and gentlemen, on a Tuesday morning five years ago the nation we all love experienced one of the cruelest acts the modern world has seen. In our sorrow, we also felt inspiration as we learned of airline passengers who rose up against hijackers to prevent greater loss and rescuers who charged into burning towers and died in the hundreds, and the many examples of kindness and brotherhood that America showed to each other on one of the worst days in our history.

From that hour of destruction to this very moment, the people and the government of the United States have answered violence with justice, honor and moral courage. America is a good, a decent and a generous country. The ideals that gave life to this nation are the same ideals we uphold at home and that we serve abroad.

We fight not only to protect ourselves and to overcome the dangers to civilization, but to liberate the oppressed and to give others the chance to decide their own destiny so that all of us can one day live in peace on the foundation of human freedom.

Liberty and equality, justice and humanity, self-government, tolerance, respect and the rule of law, these are the principles by which we fight, the principles by which we live, and the principles by which we will prevail. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

PRESENTATION OF THE
NATIONAL RECRUITER OF THE YEAR AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: As Commander-in-Chief, I wanted to stress the importance of recruiting, as well as rewarding those individuals who worked so hard to recruit new and reinstated members into the VFW.

This year, I have the pleasure of awarding the National Recruiter of the Year Award to an individual who hails from the Department of Missouri, and while working as an outstanding service officer, has recruited 520 new or reinstated members. Such an outstanding effort deserves to be recognized.

From Post 2866, in St. Charles, Missouri, please welcome Dennis Flynn, the National Recruiter of the Year. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "National Recruiter of the Year Award presented to Dennis F. Flynn.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of your outstanding service in the VFW membership program.

"Your exceptional initiative and untiring effort during the 2005-2006 membership year contributed immeasurably toward the national membership goal of recruiting 180,000 new or reinstated members.

"For the 'Proud to Serve America's Veterans' team, you are commended for your professional achievements and recognized for your dedication to the goals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 28th day of August, 2006."

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

COMRADE DENNIS FLYNN: Thank you. (Applause)

APPRECIATION BY THE DEPARTMENTS OF
MISSISSIPPI AND LOUISIANA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: As you all know, shortly after our convention last year the Gulf Coast region suffered two horrific hurricanes.

Many of our comrades and sisters were left without shelter, food or water. Concerned members of the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary responded to their plight immediately with unparalleled generosity.

Ladies and gentlemen, here to speak to all of you today are leaders from the Departments of Mississippi and Louisiana, the two Departments that were affected most from the storms.

Please welcome Donald Verucchi, the Immediate Past Commander of Mississippi, and Precilla Wilkewitz, the Adjutant Quartermaster from Louisiana.

COMRADE DONALD VERUCCHI: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, thank you for the opportunity to thank the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary from all over this country for what they did for us on the Gulf Coast. Nearly a year ago today, we got knocked down, but we didn't get knocked out. Thanks to your food, your clothing, your money and your prayers, we are rebuilding the Department of Mississippi, the Gulf Coast,

and all those who suffered because of those two terrible hurricanes, Katrina and Rita.

I would like to personally thank my hurricane team, the Katrina team in Mississippi, for what they did for us. On that team is a lady who I was blessed with 37 years ago and also blessed with as Department President of the Auxiliary for the Department of Mississippi, who helped me tremendously succeed in overcoming the barriers that hurricane put up, my wife and my sweetheart, Carolyn Verucchi. You guys did a tremendous job for us. Thank you so much.

If we forgot, and we probably did, if we forgot to send you a thank you, please know from the bottom of our hearts what you have done for us means a lot to us. I have got to thank the National Organization, both the men and the women, the Ladies Auxiliary under the leadership of Sandy Germany and Celia Davis, and my Commander-in-Chief Jim Mueller and "Gunner" Kent, Larry Maher for all the things they did for us to make sure we had what it took to be on the Gulf Coast during those times.

The first few days after the storm, the Commander-in-Chief called me and he said get to the Gulf Coast with some immediate needs, cash. We loaded the car, put 15 gallons of gas in the trunk in cans, and ice chests to stay one or two days. There were no banks, no services, no anything.

The National Organization, you provided us with the first \$150,000 that we distributed over four days. In fact, we distributed about \$180,000 over the first four days, in fact, with a lot of accolades and a lot of thanks to you because I happened to be Commander.

One individual said to us, "Thank God that you and Carolyn were Commander and President. Thank you." I said, "Thank God Jim Mueller and Sandy Germany were Commander and President this year."

I will finish with this. We were at Ocean Springs, Mississippi, in a Post that was nearly destroyed, had been full of water, handing out cash money in those early days. A young Iraqi veteran came to the front, filled out the paper, handed it to me, and I handed him \$200 in cash.

By the way, on his arm was his wife, who looked to be about 16 or 18 years old, he didn't look much older, and he said to me, "Commander, I know I joined the right organization." Commander Mueller, I know I joined the right organization. Thank you. (Applause)

COMRADE PRECILLA WILKEWITZ: National Commander-in-Chief Jim Mueller and President Sandy Germany, Distinguished Guests:

On behalf of the Department of Louisiana Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary, I am honored to bring remarks on behalf of Past State Commander Tom Kyjak, who has suffered a heart attack and he could not be here with us today. He has asked me to thank the comrades and sisters of this great organization for their generous donation of funds and supplies.

We could not have done the job we had to do, the relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita, without your help. The Department of Louisiana received over \$721,660. Now, \$60 was given to me today by Father Leonard. When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit our coast, no one could have dreamed of the devastation of lives and property and things that they had had all their lives were just gone in a heartbeat.

We have individuals that left Louisiana to go to a safer destination, and it appears although the hurricane, especially Katrina, followed them and

demolished their vehicles they had gotten away with. Those were the things that we had to see. In my 22 years as the Adjutant Quartermaster to the Department of Louisiana, I have had to do some hurricane relief with the assistance of the comrades and sisters of the Department of Louisiana.

But I want you to know as soon as Katrina hit and as soon as we had electricity, I moved into the Department Headquarters. It took me about four days to get hold of "Gunner" Kent, the Adjutant General. Of course, the Adjutant General was there on behalf of the Chief and the National Council members. They gave us the funds to start distributing immediately.

But Katrina was a little bit harder because we couldn't find our people. The floods had driven them everywhere. It is still hard to find them. We still have checks with their names on it, and their checks will be given as soon as we find them.

Madam President Sandy Germany, I want you to know that we want to commend the Ladies Auxiliary for the \$46,821 that were given from the Ladies Auxiliary. We really appreciate the extra efforts they did. We want to recognize the Department of Ohio. Ohio gave us \$95,785. Thank you, Ohio.

You know, when our Chief took the reins and he signed up with "Gunner" Kent, I was a little leary because I know "Gunner". "Gunner" is one of the troops. He gets out there and he finds out what the troops need and he is behind us 100 percent.

So, on behalf of the Department of Louisiana Veterans of Foreign Wars, Tom Kyjak, State Commander last year, Lorna Miles our Past State President and our current officers, we thank the comrades and sisters for the wonderful, wonderful support they have given in supplies and funds. You have blessed our hearts and we ask God's blessings on you. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF R. LEE ERMEY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Golden Globe nominee and Boston Society of Film Critics Award Winner for Best Supporting Actor in "Full Metal Jacket", R. Lee Ermey is one of the most successful and talented actors in film and television today.

Lee, who also has hosted his own show for the History Channel called "Mail Call", served 11 years active duty with the U.S. Marine Corps. He rose to the rank of Staff NCO, served two years as a drill instructor and a tour of duty in Vietnam.

Medically retired in 1971, he used his G.I. Bill benefits and enrolled at the University of Manila in the Philippines where he studied drama. Perhaps one of "the Gunny's" most important roles is that as official spokesperson for the VFW Foundation's Unmet Needs Program and by serving in that capacity has given tremendous support to the VFW's effort to improve the lives of veterans and service personnel, their families and the communities in which they live and work.

With the generous help of corporate sponsors like Vermont American Power Tool Accessories, the Unmet Needs Program continues to reduce the hardship many families endure while a spouse is deployed.

Comrades and ladies, please give a warm welcome to "the Gunny", R. Lee Ermey. (Applause)

RESPONSE – COMRADE R. LEE ERMEY

COMRADE ERMEY: All right. Knock it off and sit down. (Laughter) Where are you people going? Back there sit down. (Laughter) You know, I have done a lot of roles in a lot of films and I was in the Marine Corps. As a matter of fact, I have been with the Marine Corps for 45 years, but one of the most important roles I am playing, one of the most important roles that I am doing right now is the Unmet Needs Program.

We all have been looking for a way that we can pull our share of the load, and I am a little bit old to be charging up the hill at high port, shooting bad guys. Don't get me wrong. I can still get up the hill, but I need to take a break before I shoot any of the bad guys. So, leave that up to the young guys now.

Most of you know, I am the spokesman for the Unmet Needs Program. That is a program that helps those military families whose primary breadwinners are currently deployed. This program was created back in 2004 by Vermont American, the leading provider of power tools, drill bits and saw blades in America.

Vermont American was looking for a way to pull their share of the load, too. So they stepped up to the plate and decided, you know what, we will help the families. That is what we will do. Vermont American has worked closely with the VFW foundation and have provided major funding and ongoing support for the Unmet Needs Program. In fact, a portion of everything that they sell, every drill bit, every saw blade that they sell is given to the Unmet Needs program.

So you woodworkers and you members out there, and you machinists, when you go down to Home Depot to get a new drill bit, think about that. With me on stage today is Joe Smith, Vermont American's key executive responsible for the Unmet Needs Program. Joe, on behalf of all Americans, I thank you and Vermont American for helping us out, simplified.

Also on stage is Junior ROTC Battalion Commander Cadet John Jenkins from Wentworth Military Academy. John, how do you do it? Thanks for being here. Wentworth Military Academy is located just east of our beloved big building in Kansas City, where we all hang our hats, and it is the beautiful city of Lexington, Missouri.

Wentworth has a 127-year tradition of serving others, and John and his fellow cadets are going to demonstrate that tradition by serving, by taking the lead and motivating other Junior ROTC Units to help out with the Unmet Needs Program. We are all military, we are all in this together.

You know, these young people coming up realize that this is their future. They are going to be the ones taking the places of the people that are over there right now. They are stepping up to the plate and they are taking care of business. Today, we are issuing the Wentworth challenge to all Junior ROTC units in the United States.

All schools will be challenged by us to raise funds in their local communities for the Unmet Needs Program. These schools excel at fund-raising. If they really do it well, they are going to earn a visit from me. I am going to go over and hang out with them and corrupt their young minds for an evening. How about some of that?

They are also going to get community service credits for their units at

schools. As future military leaders, Wentworth Cadets feel that raising money for this program is just the right thing to do for the families of the men and women who are now serving in harm's way. I personally want to challenge all VFW Posts and Ladies Auxiliaries in the United States, and I am a little weary about that.

I see what you ladies did with the phone cards. You really got out there and kicked some serious tail. You did a great job. (Applause) You get out there and get some more of it. Now, in the past, the VFW Posts have successfully raised funds for the Unmet Needs Program by involving hardware stores and home centers in their towns that sell Vermont American products.

There are thousands of these stores and home centers around the country. With a little more effort, the VFW Posts can join in the ROTC units in their area to make this outreach effort even more successful. It is just the least that we can do for the brave soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen. I mean, come on, I will also visit Posts. I will even come and corrupt you guys for a little while. I will toss a few back and enjoy an evening with you.

Now, listen up. Here is a quick refresher for those of you who may have forgot what the Unmet Needs Program is all about. So check this out.

(Whereupon, a video was shown at this time on the Unmet Needs Program.)

That is just a little refresher. That kind of lets you know what we are doing here. You know, here is the deal, folks. We are activating a lot of Reserves and a lot of National Guardsmen these days. We are taking these young men off their jobs where they are making \$3,000, \$4,000 a month, and we are making them a PFC in the Army or Marine Corps, and we are sending them over to fight a war.

You know, we make them a PFC in the Marine Corps, which means they make about \$1,000 a month. That is almost enough to pay the doggone mortgage, right? Well, while they are over there fighting the war, their families slowly slip into a poverty situation. Mom and the kids are back here driving on bald-headed tires. When the furnace goes out in the wintertime and they are up in Maine or someplace where it is really cold like that, they can't afford to fix the furnace. We need to help these people out.

Now, when I was over in Iraq, and I have been to the Middle East three times now, one of the problems that these young people are having is they are worried about their families back home. Well, you know, we need these young men over there to be worrying about the task at hand, getting the job done and coming home safe and sound to their families at home, and we don't want them coming home to a family that is so deep in poverty it is going to take them another ten years to get back on their feet. It is not a fair thing to do.

Vermont American has stepped up to the plate and it has said they are going to do something about it, and we are the VFW and we will do something about it, too. We have been and we will continue to do something about it. Of course, that is just the way we are. (Applause)

Now, I want you-all to stop by the foundation booth out on the convention floor sometime today and find out more about the program. Find out how you can help us out. Okay. To simplify, you-all have a great

day. (Applause)

COMMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, sisters and guests, I personally want to thank you for attending this morning's session and for your patience in being here. We will now go into recess. The VFW will meet in this hall at 1300 hours. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 11:55 o'clock a.m.)

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2006

(The Business Session was called to order at 1:00 o'clock p.m., with Commander-in-Chief Mueller presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We will now call to order our afternoon business session. We will start the business this afternoon with the report of the Convention Rules Committee by Chairman John S. Staum.

REPORT OF CONVENTION RULES COMMITTEE

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN STAUM: Good afternoon. I have to read the convention rules to you. There are 19 rules, and I will read all 19 of them to you. They are the same rules we had last year. I don't think they have changed them in 25 years, but I will read them anyhow.

The Committee has met and my Vice-Chairman was Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera. I will start off with the rules now.

That, in accordance with the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure, and with the exceptions noted below, Demeter's Manual shall be recognized as parliamentary authority for this convention.

That, when a registered delegate desires to make a motion or address the convention, he shall rise, address the chair as "Comrade Commander-in-Chief," and after being recognized, shall state his name, Post number and Department before proceeding.

A registered delegate shall be permitted to speak but twice on any one subject or any pending resolution for a period of ten minutes each, except by consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the convention present; provided, that Chairmen of Convention Committees may speak as frequently as necessary in connection with reports of their committees; and in the event of controversy, the presiding officer shall not entertain any motion which will curtail further debate without affording the maker of the motion or a member of the particular group presenting the resolution an opportunity for five minutes of final rebuttal.

All resolutions offered by individual registered delegates must bear the endorsement of the Department Commander or in his absence the Department Adjutant. All resolutions must be submitted to the office of the Adjutant General for numbering and referral to committee no later than 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 30, 2006, and must be accompanied by a written explanation as to why the resolution was not presented to the Department Convention for consideration.

All resolutions offered on the floor at the convention, or otherwise, shall be in writing, and shall automatically and without reading, be referred to the Adjutant General for assignment to the proper committee.

Committee Chairmen, in reporting on resolutions referred to their committee, shall first read those resolutions on which favorable action is recommended. Specific resolutions shall be set aside for individual action

at the request of any delegate, the others being voted upon collectively. After action has been taken on all such resolutions, the Chairman shall read the number and title of those resolutions which the committee has disapproved. A resolution disapproved by the committee shall be automatically rejected unless a motion is made and seconded that it be approved, in which case it shall be brought up for debate and convention action.

This convention will not consider any resolution dealing with race, creed or religion, or endorse anyone for public office. This convention will not consider any resolution calling for the expenditure or appropriation of organization funds.

This convention will not consider any resolution endorsing legislation sponsored by any other veterans organization, or requesting us to join with any other organization in sponsoring legislation not expressly proposed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

No person not a duly registered delegate or member of the National Convention shall participate in debate, directly or indirectly, on any subject before the convention.

Unit rule of voting shall not be allowed in this convention.

Voting strength shall be determined by those delegates registered as of the close of the credential registration booth the previous day and as reported to the National Convention each morning. The Department Commanders will receive, prior to the beginning of each business session, a list of Posts that have properly registered delegates. Only delegates representing those Posts listed on the report will be accorded voting privileges.

On roll calls, the Department Commander of each delegation shall poll his delegation's registered delegates on the floor and shall announce the vote of his delegation.

Registered delegates of a delegation may arrive at a vote in any manner they see fit, but shall announce it in terms of full units and not in terms of a fractional part of a vote.

Reconsideration of a motion or resolution upon which final disposition has been made shall not be allowed after the session at which it was acted on has been recessed unless the body is notified of such contemplated action prior to the close of that session.

When the report of the Department Commander of the delegation is not acceptable to all registered delegates of the delegation and a poll of the Department registered delegates is demanded by three registered delegates of said Department, the Adjutant General shall poll the registered delegates, without discussion of question.

Voting shall be by acclamation, except when a roll call be demanded by 10 registered delegates representing Posts in 10 separate Departments, or by order of the Commander-in-Chief.

Nominating speeches for the national officers shall be limited to five minutes each, the time allocated to encompass all seconding speeches shall be limited to a total of four minutes. Nomination and election of national officers will be held according to the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, and Manual of Procedure, Article VI, Section 609.

Registered delegates and persons recognized by the chair shall be

entitled to a respectful hearing, and the chair shall be the authority to clear the gallery or the floor or have the Sergeant-at-Arms escort from the floor any person or persons who may create any disturbances which interfere with the orderly procedure of the convention.

Consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the convention present is necessary for suspension of the rules of this convention.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, John Staum, a delegate from Post 9625, Past Commander-in-Chief, makes a motion we accept the rules.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Post 144, Past Commander-in-Chief, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: The motion has been made and seconded for the adoption of the convention rules. Is there anything on the question? Then we will have a vote. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The convention rules are adopted. John, thank you for your service.

We will now go into the Report of Committees. The first will be on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. I will call on the Chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief Arthur J. Fellwock.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: Thank you very much, Commander. My name is Art Fellwock. I am a member of Evansville Post 1114, in Evansville, Indiana, Chairman of the By-Laws Committee. Our Committee met yesterday afternoon, as you know, and we had some open deliberation and we had a lot of discussion about all of the by-law changes.

After careful consideration of all of them, then we took a vote on every one, and that I will tell you about. Let me just remind you first, that many times it is confusing, but for every by-law there is a Manual of Procedure that corresponds to that by-law. Let me say it again. Every by-law that we have, we have a Manual of Procedure that corresponds to that particular by-law.

I have the by-laws here, which we adopted, and I shall read you the ones that we adopted, and then I shall make a motion to adopt those. Anyone wishing to have any of those set aside can request it be set aside and that we will do.

B-1, Section 102, Applications – Affiliation of New Members. It was recommended for adoption.

B-2, Membership, Life Members; recommended adoption.

B-3, Departments, Section 515, Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees. It was recommended for adoption.

B-4, Section 605, National Dues, recommended for adoption.

B-5, National Convention, Section 618, National Council of Administration – Composition, Powers and Duties. It was recommended for adoption.

B-6, Discipline, Section 902, Offenses, recommend adoption.

B-7, Membership, recommended for adoption.

B-8, Article I, Membership, Section 101, Eligibility, recommend adoption.

B-9, Membership, Section 102 – Applications – Affiliation of New Members, recommended for adoption.

B-10, Membership, section 103, Election, recommend adoption.

B-11, and I will insert right here, B-11, it was recommended by the Committee to return to the National By-Laws for further study and to rewrite B-11.

B-12, Membership, Section 105 – Members in Good Standing, recommended adoption.

B-13, Membership, Section 106 – Former Members. We recommended adoption.

B-14, Membership, Section 107 – Transfers, recommended for adoption.

B-15, Membership, Section 108 – Removing Ineligibles, recommended for adoption.

B-16, Membership, Section 109 – Right of Appeal, recommended for adoption.

B-18, Posts, Section 202, By-Laws, recommended for adoption.

B-19, Article II, Posts, Section 206 – Change of Location; Change of Meeting Place, recommended for adoption.

B-20, Section 208, Change of Name, recommended adoption.

B-25, Section 521, Council of Administration Composition, Powers and Duties, recommended for adoption.

Commander-in-Chief, I make a motion that we adopt those that I have read.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LARRY RIVERS: I am Larry Rivers, a delegate from Post 1736, Louisiana, Past Commander-in-Chief, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: is there anyone wishing to have any of these set aside?

I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 - Virginia): I am Michael Agresti, Post 3150 – Virginia. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I request that we set aside B-18 and 19.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: They will be set aside. Any others wishing to have anything else set aside? We will now vote on the ones that have been recommended for adoption. All those in favor will signify by the sign of “aye”; all those opposed. The motion carries.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: We will return to B-18, and take them in that order. At this time I would like for the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Larry Rivers, to read our stand or the staff's recommendation in regards to why we recommended adoption.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The staff recommends B-18, which eliminates the need to provide every member a copy of the proposed By-Laws seven days before the meeting, but requires the Post and other members that the By-Laws are being proposed and how we can obtain a copy of them 20 days prior to the meeting.

The Committee felt like this was in the best interest of the Posts and our membership, therefore, we recommended adoption of B-18.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any discussion?

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 - Virginia): Sir, the reason I requested that this be set aside is that it employs a term that is not otherwise defined in our By-Laws or Manual of Procedure. That is the term "stated meeting". It eliminates the term that has previously been used, regular or special meeting. Those are the terms that are still employed in Section 203, and I would support the theory behind this By-Law.

However, I would move that it be amended to delete that term "stated meeting" and reinsert "regular or special meeting," sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We cannot amend the By-Laws. You have to vote it up or down as it is.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 - Virginia): I recommend we vote it down.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: There is a motion on the floor that has been made and seconded for the approval. Anything further on the question? We will now vote. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: B-19 was set aside. This is Section 206, Change of Location; Change of Meeting Place in regards to the Post. It is just the change. The meeting place, change the location is what this is in regards to. I will make a motion we adopt B-19.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): I again, sir, have no objection to the precepts behind this recommendation. However, I will point out that Section 206 of the Manual of Procedure says refer to Section 206 of the By-Laws. If we change this By-Law now, we will have nowhere to go. I propose that we vote on M-14 first, and then revisit this one at a later date, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any other discussion? Comrade, you will have to make a motion and get a second on this. Otherwise, it is dead.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): I make a motion that we set aside B-19 until after the convention has voted on M-14, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is already set aside.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): I don't want to vote against it, I simply think I want to bring to the attention of the chair the fact that if we vote on this now there will be no provision in our By-Laws or Manual of Procedure until we act on M-14. If M-14 gets voted down, we are left with nothing.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: You will need to make a motion and have a second on it.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): Well, sir, I move that we table B-19 until after we vote on M-14.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We have a motion to table. I need a second on that. Seeing none, it dies for the lack of a second. Any further discussion? Seeing none, we will now vote to adopt. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: I shall now read the ones that we rejected in Committee.

B-17, Section 201, Formation, Chartering and Instituting, recommended rejection.

B-21, National Convention, Section 217- Regional National Council of Administration Members – How Elected, recommended rejection.

B-22, Men's Auxiliary, recommended rejection.

B-23, Ladies Auxiliary, recommended rejection.

B-24, Discipline, Section 903, Procedure for Disciplinary Actions, recommended rejection.

B-27, Membership, Section 102 – Applications – Affiliation of New Members, recommended rejection.

B-28, Posts, Section 220 – Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers, recommended rejection.

B-29, Membership, Section 111 – Life Members, recommended rejection.

B-30, Membership, Section 102 – Applications – Affiliation of New Members, recommended rejection.

B-31, Section 617 – Regional National Council of Administration Members – How Elected, recommended rejection.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, does anyone wish any of these to be voted upon? Seeing none, we will move on.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: At this time we will move on to the Proposed Amendments to the Manual of Procedure. At this time I am going to ask my Co-Chairman, Larry Rivers, to present that to you.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. As the Chairman mentioned when we began the presentation of the By-Laws, the By-Law changes also have corresponding sections in our Manual of Procedure. I think if you have reviewed the various "M" proposals, these are changes that will correspond with the adoption and changes you have now made in the By-Laws.

I will read those very quickly, the ones that the Committee has recommended adoption.

M-1, Article I - Membership, Section 111 – Life Members, recommend adoption.

M-2, Article VI - National Convention, Section 605 – National Dues, recommend adoption.

M-3, Article I - Membership, recommend adoption.

M-4, Article I - Membership, Section 101 – Eligibility, recommend adoption.

M-5, Article I - Membership, Section 102 – Applications – Affiliation of New Members, recommend adoption.

M-6, Article I - Membership, Section 103 – Election, Notification, Obligation, recommend adoption.

M-8, Article I - Membership, Section 105 – Members in Good Standing, recommend adoption.

M-9, Article I – Membership, Section 106 – Former Members – Reinstatement, recommend adoption.

M-10, Article I – Membership, Section 107 – Transfers, recommend adoption.

M-11, Article I – Membership, Section 108 – Removing Ineligibles,

recommend adoption.

M-13, Article II – Posts, Section 201 – Formation, Chartering and Instituting, recommend adoption.

M-14, Article II – Posts, Section 202 – By-Laws, recommend adoption.

M-16, Article II – Posts, Section 206 – Change of Location; Change of Meeting Place, recommend adoption.

M-17, Article II – Posts, Section 208 – Change of Name, recommend adoption.

Commander-in-Chief, I move the adoption of the recommendations of the Committee as just read on Articles M-2 through M-17.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: There has been a motion made and seconded. Is there anyone wishing any of these to be set aside? Seeing none, we will now vote on the motion. All those in favor will signify by the sign of “aye”; all those opposed.

COMRADE ROBERT WEISS (Post 2406 – Michigan): I ask to set aside M-13.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: M-13 will be set aside.

We will go back and vote on the ones recommended for approval. All those in favor will signify by the sign of “aye”; those opposed. The motion carried.

We will go back to M-13.

COMRADE ROBERT WEISS (Post 2406 – Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, M-13 is the Manual of Procedure for By-Law B-17 and B-17 was rejected. So if B-17 is rejected, we have to reject M-13.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, there is confusion here. We rejected B-17, so we need to reject M-13 as well, because it related in the Manual of Procedure to B-17. So even though the motion before the floor is to recommend its adoption, we would urge the delegates to defeat the motion to adopt.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: I will second that motion.

We have a motion to go ahead and adopt M-13. Anything further under discussion? All those in favor will signify by the sign of “aye”; those opposed. The “nays” have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I will very quickly read the M’s that the Committee recommended rejection.

M-7, Article I – Membership, Section 104 – Admission Fees and Dues. The Committee recommended rejection because B-11, the corresponding By-Law change was withdrawn.

M-15, Article II – Posts, Section 203 – Regular and Special Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees. The Committee recommended rejection of M-15 because the corresponding By-Law change was withdrawn for reconsideration and rewrite. Those were the recommendations for rejection.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Anyone wishing any of these be set aside? Seeing none, they die for lack of a motion. Anything further on this? At this time I extend my thanks to the Committee, and at this time I will dismiss them and thank those that served on the Committee. Thank you, Art Fellwock and Past Commander-in-Chief Larry Rivers and your

Committee. You are dismissed.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, before we go into the next Committee, all personnel that were members of the General Resolutions Committee yesterday, all members of the General Resolutions Committee will meet in the back of the room with Past Commander-in-Chief Wally Hogan. We had two General Resolutions that were just presented to the chair, so you will have to go back there and discuss these in a room. But Past Commander-in-Chief Hogan will wait for you back there and then give you your instructions.

Thank you very much, comrades. I am sorry for this inconvenience.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I will now call upon the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization. The Chairman is Past Commander-in-Chief Ray Soden. I will call for his report.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. First of all, I would like to thank you for the appointment, and especially giving our Committee a great Vice-Chairman in Jack Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief from Florida. Most of all, the outstanding Committee members who really took the time and effort to discuss all of the resolutions that we have, and came to their conclusion.

Their conclusion was that they did not adopt any of the resolutions that came before us. They rejected every resolution, and I will now move to reading the resolutions that were rejected.

Resolution 201, Protective Mailing Covers for VFW Magazines, rejected.

Resolution 202, Veterans "Find a Buddy" Information Service, rejected.
No. 203, Reinstate Disciplinary Proceeding, rejected.

No. 204, To Correct the Disparity Between Awards for Scout of the Year and the Other VFW Youth Recognition Programs, rejected.

No. 205, Review Regulation Headgear, rejected.

No. 206, Prohibit Use of the VFW Seal or Emblem by the VFW Political Action Committee's Endorsed Candidates, rejected.

No. 207, Annual Membership Card, rejected.

No. 208, Support the Founders Day Program by Restricting National Activities on the Date of Founders Day, rejected.

No. 209, The Black Beret, rejected.

No. 210, Hats, rejected.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that concludes the reading of all the resolutions that have been rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Anyone wishing any of these to be set aside? Seeing none, they die for lack of action.

At this time I wish to dismiss the Committee and I want to thank Past Commander-in-Chief Ray Soden and all his Committee for what they have done. It is now dismissed. Thank you.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: One thing I did omit, and I apologize for that, is I want to thank the outstanding staff members that we had with our Committee. I really appreciated their input, their time and

their efforts. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, Ray.

We will have the Report of the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs. He is not here.

I will call on the Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions. The Chairman of that Committee is John F. Gwizdak, Past Commander-in-Chief.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Delegates to this convention, Comrade Mueller, I report that your Committee met on Veterans Service Resolutions. It convened at 2:00 o'clock on Sunday, August 27, 2006. Roll call was taken and preliminary matters were discussed.

The Committee was divided into three Sub-Committees to carefully deliberate each of the 18 resolutions that were assigned. The Sub-Committees were established as follows:

Sub-Committee 1, Medical Programs, Chaired by Robert Kraft from Wyoming, and Vice-Chairman Dale Roening from North Dakota. Staff advisors were Mike Larocke, Mark Carter and Chris Needham.

Sub-Committee No. 2 was on Unemployment, Chaired by Paul Curtis from Indiana and Vice-Chairman Robert Pofh from Ohio. Staff advisors were Larry Berman and Eric Hillman.

Sub-Committee No. 3, Veterans Benefits and Entitlements, Chaired by Thomas Hansen from Minnesota, and Vice-Chairman James Witzer from Delaware. Staff advisors were Fred Burns and Quentin Kinderman.

Before proceeding to the report, I wish to express my appreciation to Bill Bradshaw, Director of National Veterans Service, and Dennis Cullinan, National Legislative Director of the National Legislative Service, for the valuable technical guidance which they and their staff provided to the Committee.

Also, I want to thank Past Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot from Montana for serving as Vice-Chairman on this very important Convention Committee, and to Bill Dossier, the Assistant Director of Employment and Homeless Programs, who served as our Committee Secretary and coordinated the results of our deliberations.

Commander-in-Chief, with your permission, I will begin with the Committee report by presenting those resolutions that the Committee recommends to be approved as written. Past Commander-in-Chief Pouliot will then proceed to report those resolutions that were approved, as amended, and finally I will conclude by presenting the resolutions that the Committee recommends for rejection.

If for any reason you or the delegates to this convention would like a resolution set aside for further discussion, please so indicate after we have completed each segment of our report.

I will now proceed by reading the resolution numbers that the Committee recommended for approval as written.

No. 601, Adequate Department of Veterans Affairs Budget.

No. 602, Concurrent Receipt of Retirement Pay and Veterans' Disability Compensation.

Resolution No. 603, Timely Access to Quality Health Care.
Resolution No. 604, Oppose VA Pharmaceutical Co-Payment Increases.
Resolution No. 605, Entitlement to Nursing Home Care.
Resolution No. 606, Establish Presumption of Service Connection for
Radiation Related Disabilities.
No. 607, Effective Veterans Employment and Training System.
Resolution No. 608, VA Health Care for Women Veterans.
No. 609, Repeat of VA Home Loan Funding Fees.
No. 610, Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care.
No. 611, VA Medicare Subvention.
No. 614, Exempt VA Disability Compensation in Determination of
Eligibility for HUD's Assisted Senior Housing Program.
No. 615, Employment Support for the Guard and Reserve.
No. 616, Specially Adapted Housing Allowance.
No. 619, Adequate Funding for State Veterans Homes Programs.
No. 621, Veteran's Preference.
No. 622, Reaffirm Support for Service Members Occupational
Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA).
No. 623, Workforce Investment Act.
No. 624, Increased Dependency and Indemnity Compensation to
Surviving Spouses of Service Members Who Die While on Active Duty.
No. 625, A GI Bill for the 21st Century.
No. 626, Homeless Veterans.
No. 627, Furnish Headstones or Markers for the Marked Graves of
Certain Individuals.
No. 629, Include Dental Care as Part of the Veterans Uniform Benefits
Package.
No. 630, Improve Veterans Prescription Drug Access.
No. 631, Change Disability Pension Eligibility Requirements.
No. 632, Repeat of the Montgomery GI Bill Pay Reduction Provision.
No. 633, Place World War II Veterans in Enrollment Priority Category 6
for VA Health Care Purposes.
No. 634, Attorney Fee-Based Representation at VA Regional Offices.
No. 635, Amend Internal Revenue Code for the Veterans State
Mortgage Bond Program.
No. 636, Government Headstones.
No. 637, VA to Pay for Nursing Home Care in State Homes.
No. 638, Establish a National Trust Fund to Compensation Veterans for
Service Connected Illnesses Caused by Asbestos Exposure.
No. 639, Exempt Priority Group Category 5 from Paying VA Medication
Co-Payments.
No. 640, Additional Benefits and Services to Veterans Children with
Spina Bifida.
No. 642, Repeat the Survivor's Benefit Plan and Dependency and
Indemnity Compensation Offset.
No. 643, Emergency Care Services for All VA Enrolled Veterans.
No. 644, Increase in Special Monthly Compensation.
No. 645, Women Veterans Health Care.
No. 646, Burial Plot Allowance.
No. 647, Minimum Compensation for Hearing Loss.

No. 648, Definition of Service Connection for VA Benefits Purposes.
 No. 649, Extend Presumption of Service Connection for Korean Agent Orange Veterans.
 No. 650, Provide Grave Liners for All Eligible Beneficiaries Who Desire Burial in a National Cemetery.
 No. 651, Establish a Breast Cancer Study.
 No. 652, Exempt Catastrophically Disabled veterans from Paying VA Co-Payments.
 No. 653, Combat Related Special Compensation.
 No. 654, National Guard and Reserve Benefits.
 No. 655, VA Claims Backlog.
 No. 658, Mandate Three Percent of Federal Contracts for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses.
 No. 659, Lung Cancer Screening and Research.
 No. 660, Promote Stem Cell Research in the VA.
 No. 661, Establish a VA Medical Center in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas.
 No. 664, Space Available for Family Members of Retired Members of the Armed Forces.
 No. 665, Post Exchange and Commissary Privileges for U.S. Military Retirees Residing or Traveling Overseas.
 No. 675, Collection of Veterans DNA by the VA.
 No. 679, Health Care for Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury.
 No. 680, Extend Gulf War Presumptions, Registry and Health Care of Afghanistan Theater Veterans.
 No. 681, Consider Treatment Eligibility for Presumptive Service Connected Conditions as a Formal Claim for VA Compensation.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move to accept the Committee's recommendation to approve these resolutions.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TOM POULIOT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Tom Pouliot, a delegate from Post 1116, Montana, I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: You have heard the recommendation for approval. Does anyone want any of these issues set aside?

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CHRISTIAN KWIKOSKI (Post 144 – Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move to set aside Resolution 620.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: No. 620 is set aside. I don't think we read that one off, comrade. Comrade, that resolution was not recommended for approval.

COMRADE CHRISTIAN KWIKOSKI (Post 144 – Massachusetts): My apologies, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Anyone else wishing any of these to be set aside?

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): Sir, I respectfully request that we set aside 627 and 660.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, comrade. Those two will be set aside. Any further discussion or anyone want any others to be

set aside? If not, we will then vote on these for approval. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried.

We will go to No. 627 first.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, sir, I request that we reject 627 for the following reasons:

The title of this is to furnish headstones or markers for marked graves for certain individuals.

"Be It Resolved, that we support amending Public Law 107-103 to allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to furnish a government headstone or marker to eligible veterans notwithstanding the fact that the graves are already marked with a private marker."

Sir, I think that the VA has more higher priority funding requirements at this time. That is why I move it be rejected, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any other discussion on this? There is no further discussion. We shall then vote on this. You either vote it up or down. The motion has been made and seconded to approve it.

COMRADE DOC CROUCH (Post 3150 – Virginia): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: There is no need for a second. It has been recommended and a motion made and seconded. Any further discussion on this?

Microphone No. 1 will be recognized.

COMRADE DANIEL CROCKER (Post 796 – Michigan): Comrades, the motion I heard on this mike was to reject the motion. You cannot reject something that you don't have on the floor. You have to have a positive motion.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MIHELIC: There was a recommendation by the Committee, and a motion and a second, to adopt this resolution. It was set aside for discussion. Discussion is being made. The vote to this convention is to adopt. You can either vote "yes" to adopt it or "no" to reject it. It was set aside for that reason.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DANIEL CROCKER (Post 796 – Michigan): I am Dan Crocker, Post 696, Port Huron, Michigan, State Service Director of the VFW in Michigan. This proposed resolution was made as a result of a number of contacts that we received from claimants throughout the country, indicating after the law was passed in 2001 they were unable to have the same thing that those that are having today as a result of that enactment of legislation. It is not a budget buster. Those markers are \$87 apiece, and I speak in opposition to the rejection of this motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you. Any further discussion? Seeing none, we shall now vote. All those in favor of adopting 627, please signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. We will now go to No. 660.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): I am sorry to be the jack-in-the-box here. Sir, I would be interested in knowing the reasoning of the Committee for recommending the approval of this. My concern is that billions upon billions of dollars are being spent in the

private sector for stem cell research.

I again bring the issue up that we have very significant funding shortfalls within the VA that need to be addressed. I think the private sector is much more efficient at doing this research than would be any sort of government institution, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any other discussion?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Commander-in-Chief and delegates, approving this would also help, because the VA is recognized as one of the greatest facilities for experiments on medicine and other things. Permitting this to happen with controls, as it is written, would give the VA that opportunity to do stem cell research, and again they are recognized as one of the best research facilities around.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Seeing no one at the microphones, we will now vote on 660. You will either vote it up or down.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE J. L. SMITH (Post 1406 – Texas): Comrade Commander, I am J. L. Smith from Dallas, Texas, Post 1406. The stem cell research is a very, very important issue. With all the people we have got that is dying from diabetes from Vietnam, and which goes into cancer, we don't care if the private sector finds a cure or the VA finds a cure.

We all have been stricken down by somebody in our family with cancer. We need to adopt this so that we can try to find a cure for cancer. It is a very important matter to me anyway.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, comrade. Any further discussion? We will try it once again. All those in favor of supporting Resolution 660 will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, I will read the resolutions that the Committee recommended for approval, as amended.

Resolution 612, Small Business Administration Veterans Programs.

Resolution 617, Presumptive Service Connection for Tinnitus and Hearing Loss.

Resolution 618, Licensure and Certification.

No. 620, Refund of Montgomery GI Bill Contributions.

No. 641, Support for Veteran and Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business Ventures.

No. 656, Timely Survivors' Benefit Program Entitlement Payment to Survivors.

No. 657, Expand DOD Pre-Separation Counseling and DOL Transition Assistance Programs.

No. 662, Extend a Presumption of Service Connection to Blast Survivors.

No. 667, To Enhance Compensation Benefits for Veterans in Certain Cases of Impairment of Vision Involving Both Eyes.

No. 670, Support DVOPS/LVER Grants Being Returned to Staffing Grants.

Resolution No. 672, Presumption of Service Connection for Melanoma With Related Disabilities.

No. 674, Establish a Separate Budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

No. 678, Restore the Sponsorship of the National Veterans Golden Age

Games.

Commander-in-Chief, I move to accept the Committee's recommendation to approve these resolutions as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I am John Gwizdak, Post 5080, Past Commander-in-Chief and a delegate to this convention, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, does anyone wish any of these resolutions to be set aside for discussion?

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CHRISTIAN KWIKOSKI (Post 144 – Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Christian Kwikoski from VFW Post 144, North End, Massachusetts. I move we set aside 620.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any other set asides? Does anyone else want any other set aside? What we will do is go ahead and vote on the resolutions, as amended. There has been a motion made and seconded. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The motion carried. We will now bring up for discussion Resolution 620.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CHRISTIAN KWIKOSKI (Post 144 – Massachusetts): I rise in opposition to No. 620. This very resolution was on the floor last year and was defeated. I spoke at that time. No. 620, for someone who is going to school on the Montgomery Bill or the Army College Fund, represents to me in the simplest terms, taking money away from those who can use it.

We have a lot of men and women currently serving who will count on the GI Bill and the College Fund. This money that is in the fund should not be returned to those who didn't do all they could to have it used for them. That money is available for up to ten years for anybody who is honorably discharged, and should they appeal their case in the VA they can also get the money allotted to them in that way.

However, for people who don't earn a general or a discharge under honorable conditions, they have forsaken that money they have put in. Really, all we are talking about is \$100 per month for the first 12 months of their federal service. This is a bad resolution. We should serve to award those that have done their duty for their country. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Anyone else who wants to speak on this issue for or against? Does anybody else on the staff want to comment on the resolution?

COMRADE BILL BRADSHAW (Director of National Veterans Service): Delegates to this convention, Resolution 620 was on the floor before, and I agree with my comrade. One of the things is that the military takes your money out to pay for the educational bill. That is your money, that is not the government's money.

If you do not use that, then the government should return your money, not the matching funds but your money that you have contributed. We strongly believe that that is what should happen.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CHRISTIAN KWIKOSKI (Post 144 – Massachusetts): These are my final words on the subject, and then I won't bother anybody

anymore. The comrade is correct, it is your money that is taken out. However, if you look statistically at the percentage of veterans who take all of their money from the fund, that money that remains inside the fund helps everyone else who continues on in school for the duration that they are here. That's my point.

My point is that these veterans, they did not leave under honorable conditions. That money is helping their fellow comrades. My final point, thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you. Any further discussion for or against?

COMRADE BILL BRADSHAW (Director of National Veterans Service): I appreciate the comments made by the comrade, but that fund goes back into the DOD. The VA actually pays the benefit, but that money goes to the DOD. So, I strongly believe the money should be returned back to the person that contributed it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Seeing no one at the microphone for discussion, we will now vote it up or down. The Committee has recommended approval. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed. I say it carried. You have a right to challenge the chair. I will say I am doubtful. We will call it again.

COMRADE STAN WILKINSON (Post 9140 – Arizona): I would like to have a roll call vote or a hand vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Sir, I said I will do this first. I will go through it again. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed by "no". It is defeated.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I will read the numbers and titles that the Committee recommended for rejection and the reason therefore.

Resolution 613, Veterans Undiagnosed Illnesses. It has been rejected because that resolution has already been accomplished.

Resolution No. 628, Require that Certain Veterans Employment and Training Service Position be Staffed by Veterans. It was rejected in favor of Resolution 670, as amended.

Resolution 663, Combat PTSD a Recognized Issue. It was rejected in favor of Resolutions 601, 603 and 610.

Resolution 666, Extend Veterans Undiagnosed Illnesses Period of Disability Eligibility Beyond December 31, 2006. It was rejected because it has already been accomplished.

Resolution No. 668, Support for VA Paying its Fair Share of the Cost of Caring for Veterans Residing in States Veterans Home Programs. It was rejected in favor of Resolution 619.

Resolution 669, Concurrent Receipt of Military Longevity Retirement Pay and Department of Veterans Affairs Disability Compensation. It was rejected in favor of Resolution 602.

Resolution 671, Support Transition Assistance Program and Require Adequate Staffing. It was rejected in favor of Resolution 657.

Resolution 673, Legislation to End the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Offset to the Survivors' Benefits Program Annuity. It was rejected in favor of Resolution 642.

Resolution 676, Report on Diabetes of Air Force Personnel Serving in

Thailand During the Vietnam War as a Result of Exposure to Agent Orange and the Denial of Treatment by the Veterans Administration. It was rejected because it supports another organization for a non-member resolution.

Resolution No. 677, Amend the Federal Tax Code for Veterans' Home Ownership. It was rejected in favor of Resolution 635.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Does anyone want to discuss anything? If not, they die for the lack of action.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I wish to thank you for the appointment. I thank Past Commander-in-Chief Pouliot for his assistance, the staff's assistance, and most of all we had a tremendous Committee that did a lot of hard work to bring these resolutions to you and your support of that Committee's effort was shown here today. Thank you again.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, Past Commanders-in-Chief John Gwizdak and Tom Pouliot. At this time I would like to dismiss your Committee. I want to thank you and your Committee for the hard work you have done and the good job you have done. Thank you.

I will now call upon Dave Butters for a Report on the Credentials Committee.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE DAVID BUTTERS (Post 475 – Delaware): I am Dave Butters, a delegate from Post 475, Newark, Delaware, to report the number of delegates who registered their credentials as of the close of business 4:00 p.m. yesterday, August 27, 2006. There were 9,534 delegates registered. There were 36 total Department Commanders who registered their credentials.

Now, if any Department Commander registered today, they will be reported in tomorrow's report. The total Past Commander-in-Chief, 32. The total National Officers, 38. That is for a grand total of 9,640 delegates. Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, Dave.

At this time I would like to call on the Committee on General Resolutions for their report. The Chairman is Past Commander-in-Chief Wally G. Hogan.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. Before starting with the General Resolutions, I would like to introduce the Vice-Chairmen of our Committee. First of all, Past Commander-in-Chief Cooper T. Holt; Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Currie; and Past Commander-in-Chief Norman Staab. I would also like to thank Steve representing National for his assistance during this Committee meeting.

I will first read those resolutions that we adopted. I will read the resolution and then the description. Those that were represented for adoption were Resolution No. 301, Emergency Resolution Retention of Departmental Approval of National Resolutions.

No. 303, Fraudulent Claims of Heroism.

No. 304, Why We Must Protect the American Flag.

And last, No. 307, which was submitted this morning, Support the Creation of a Joint Middle Eastern Veterans Memorial for Three Recent

Incursions at One Site. This basically is to recognize those Afghan veterans, those Persian Gulf and those serving in Iraq, so they don't have to wait 20 or 30 years until they have a monument erected in Washington, D.C. The Committee recommends 307 be adopted.

I would move these be adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BOB CURRIEO: I am Bob Currieo, Department of Arizona, seconds that motion. I am a Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We have a motion made and seconded. Does anyone wish any of these to be set aside for discussion?

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): I request that we set aside 303 and 304 for discussion. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you. Anyone wishing any others to be set aside? If not, then we will vote upon the ones that have been asked for approval. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The motion passed.

We will now bring up for discussion back on the floor Resolution 303.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): The reason I requested 303 to be set aside for discussion is I would be interested in knowing the Committee's thought process on this. Title 18 of the U.S. Code already imposes criminal penalties for people who fraudulently wear these awards.

But also conspicuously absent from this recommendation or this resolution are any of the crosses, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Navy Cross or the Air Force Cross, so we are wondering why we are going forward without inclusion of those prestigious awards, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Does the chair care to comment on this, or the staff?

COMRADE STEVE BUSKIRK: The Committee recommended adoption. The comments are that the VFW stands to support any local or national laws such as this, plus we support these laws already in place.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any further discussion?

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): Again, sir, I have no objection to the thought process, but why did we not amend this to include those second highest decorations?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any further comments? Seeing none, we shall now vote on Resolution 303. It has been recommended for approval. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried. We will now discuss Resolution 304.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): Again, I do not oppose the theory behind this resolution. I am opposed to, however, the language of this resolution. Since the VFW stands to support and defend the institutions of freedom, I feel that calling the Supreme Court of the United States a radical element is contrary to our precepts, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any other discussion? Seeing none, we shall vote on Resolution 304. All those in favor will signify by the

sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The chair is in doubt. Let's try it again. All those in favor signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. It passed. The motion carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: I will now read the resolutions that the Committee recommended rejection.

Resolution No. 302, World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., and Resolution No. 305, Positive Changes to our Burial Flag. We recommend rejection. And also Resolution No. 306, Adopt the "Veterans Remembered" Flag.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Anyone want to discuss any of these? Seeing none, the resolutions fail because they are rejected. Thank you.

At this time I will now call for the Report of the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs. The chairman is Past Commander-in-Chief John Moon.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MOON: Commander-in-Chief Mueller, it is my pleasure to report to the convention that the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs convened in the Reno-Sparks Convention Center at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, August 27, 2006.

Your instructions were read, roll call was conducted, action was taken on the resolutions referred to this Committee. A portion of the Committee members were designated to participate on the POW/MIA Subcommittee. For their support, wisdom and guidance, I would like to thank Vice-Chairman of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief George Cramer from the great state of Illinois.

Our chairman of the POW/MIA Subcommittee is Past Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith from Michigan. The vice-chairmen of the POW/MIA Subcommittee is Past Commander-in-Chief Ed Banas, and Past Commander-in-Chief John Smart. Also, I extend the Committee's thanks and gratitude and my personal appreciation to our Committee advisor, Mike Wysong, the Director of National Security and Foreign Affairs, and also a special thanks to our Kansas City Office.

A very special thank you also should go to the group that we got a chance and opportunity to speak to yesterday. That was General Kao, Huachu from the Republic of China, the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission, and Master Sergeant Timothy Boran, who is presently deployed in Iraq with the 101st Airborne Division, but who also is an All-American Commander and will receive his hat this week during the convention.

Mr. Kao was here and he discussed the military cooperation between the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, our country, the United States, and the Republic of China, and thanked the VFW for its friendship and consistent support to the security of this great nation. Master Sergeant Boran gave us a great boost on the ground perspective of the operations in Iraq.

Commander-in-Chief Mueller, the Committee carefully deliberated

each resolution, and I will now move forward with the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee recommendations. If any of the delegates to this convention would like to have a resolution set aside for discussion, please so indicate after I have completed the approval segment of the report and the movement for adoption.

The first four in our group of resolutions have already been set aside and they will be taken care of by the POW/MIA Committee.

So, we are going to start with Resolution No. 405, Support for the Global War on Terrorism, recommended approval.

Resolution 406, Support the War in Iraq, recommended for approval.

Resolution No. 407, Increase the Defense Budget, approval.

Resolution No. 408, Ballistic Missile Defense is a National Security Priority, approval.

Resolution No. 409, Maintain Global Air Supremacy, approval.

Resolution No. 410, Support for the Navy's DD(X) Destroyer Program, approval.

No. 411, Support for the Coast Guard Deep Water Program, approval.

No. 412, Raise Military Base Pay to Equal Private-Sector Wages, approval.

No. 413, Lower the Reserve Component Retirement Pay Age, approval.

No. 414, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal Authorization Date Change, approval.

No. 415, Air Force Ground Combat Recognition Badge, approval.

No. 416, Oppose Homosexuals Serving in the Armed Forces, approval.

No. 417, Military Recruiter Access to High School and College Campuses, approval.

No. 418, Secure America's Borders/halt Illegal Immigration, approval.

Resolution No. 419, Halt North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program, approval.

No. 420, Support NATO Expansion, approval.

No. 421, Support for the Republic of Korea, approval.

No. 423, Limit Foreign Ownership of U.S. Businesses and Properties, approval.

No. 424, Investigate the Israel Attack on the USS Liberty, approval.

Any questions on that?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

SISTER ELIZABETH SHADDIX (Post 875 – California): I would like to set aside 416, Opposing Homosexuals Serving in the Armed Forces for discussion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It will be set aside. Thank you. Do we have a motion to move to accept the ones that have been approved and a second?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I move for adoption.

COMRADE MIKE WYSONG (Post 9503 – New Jersey): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We have a set aside for 416. With that in mind, we will now vote on the ones that the Committee has made recommendations for approval. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried. We will now go to

No. 415.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

SISTER ELIZABETH SHADDIX (Post 875 – California): Knowing a lot of veterans that got out under honorable conditions that are homosexuals and other countries having homosexuals serving honorably, I believe that we should let them in as long as they don't do it while in uniform.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any further discussion for or against? Seeing none, we will now vote on Resolution 416. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The motion carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I will now read the resolution numbers that the Committee recommends for approval, as amended. It is important to note that amended language in these resolutions reflects updated information, resolution format, technical changes, deleted irrelevant wording or minor grammatical corrections. The intent of the resolved has not changed.

No. 428, Calls for Legislation Directing the Secretary of the Air Force to Authorize Permanent Wear by Airman Awarded the Combat Action Badge for Service in Army Units. The recommendation of the Committee was to approve as amended.

No. 429, Extension of Code Talkers Congressional Commemorative Gold Medal of Honor to Deserving Yet Unrecognized Code Talkers. This was to be approved, as amended.

No. 432, Support for the Republic of China on Taiwan. This was approved as amended.

No. 434, Re-Designate the Position of Secretary of the Navy as the Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps. This was to be approved as amended.

Commander-in-Chief, I move the adoption of these four resolutions, as amended.

COMRADE MIKE WYSONG (Post 9503 – New Jersey): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Anyone wishing any of these to be set aside?

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): I request 434 be set aside so we can know what the amendments were. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: What number was that? It is hard to hear up here.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): I am sorry. No. 434.

COMRADE MIKE WYSONG (Post 9503 – New Jersey): No. 434, Re-Designate the Position of Secretary of the Navy as the Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps. The only change to that was in the Resolved where it reads H.R. 34, we changed that to just legislation. So we are not limited to supporting any one bill, but as it moves through Congress, on the Senate or the House side, or other bill numbers, we can support those also. It widened our support.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): Thank you, sir.

Thank you for that clarification. I then rise in opposition to this resolution. The Secretary of the Navy has been so designated for nearly 200 years. I see no reason to change it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We are going to vote on the first three. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried.

We will now discuss No. 434. Any further discussion? Any further discussion?

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DAN CROCKER (Post 796 – Michigan): Although my esteemed colleague is correct in the back, the current Joint Chief of Staff Chairman is a Marine. That is the first time for the Marine Corps, and it is fitting and proper that we re-designate that name to acknowledge those literally millions of Marines who have fought and died for our nation as a separate entity. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any discussion? Seeing none, we will vote this up or down. All those in favor of Resolution 434, signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Commander, finally, those resolutions that the Committee recommends for rejection and the reason. After the list is read, you will have an opportunity to move the adoption on any of those resolutions. Each motion will be taken up and disposed of in order. If no motion is made by any comrade with respect to a specific resolution, the resolution is under our convention rules automatically rejected by the convention.

Resolution No. 422, Support for the Republic of China on Taiwan. The reason it is rejected is in favor of Resolution 432, which was amended and approved.

Resolution No. 427, Resolution to Expand Eligibility for the Kosovo Campaign Medal. It was rejected. All campaign medals have designated geographical criteria. The resolution seeks to authorize the Kosovo Campaign Medal to persons far removed from the area of operations.

This would be inconsistent with the Department of Defense policy. There are other medals to recognize their service in support of the operation, such as the Achievement and Commendation Medals.

Resolution No. 430, Resolve Issues of Illegal Immigrants Residing in the United States. The Committee says to reject in favor of Resolution 418, which was approved.

Resolution No. 431, Secure America's Borders/Halt Illegal Immigration. The Committee's view was to reject in favor of Resolution 418, which was approved.

Resolution No. 433, Military Recruited Access to High School and College Campuses. It was rejected in favor of 417. The last Resolved is already codified in law.

Resolution No. 435, Service Members Bankruptcy Relief. This was rejected because legislation is not required to correct these issues. The Department of Defense has recognized and taken steps to eradicate and mitigate these problems and circumstances.

Commander-in-Chief, that is all that were rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: The chairman has recommended

rejection of these.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): I request set aside of Resolution 435.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: What is it?

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): No. 435, the last one.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I am told by my Parliamentarian you need a motion to adopt.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): Very well. I move that we adopt Resolution No. 435.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We need a second.

COMRADE DOC CROUCH (Post 3150 – Virginia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We have a motion and a second. We will now bring it up for discussion.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): Commander-in-Chief, the reason I moved that this be approved and the reasoning is such that the Department of Defense does not have the power to influence fair credit reporting and/or other legislation.

They can make recommendations, but only the Congress can amend legislation. That's why I feel it is important enough that this go to the Congress. The Government Accountability Office and others have noted up to 98-percent error rate in pay and entitlements to other deployed G.I.s, especially Reserve and Guard.

We just today saw a display on your great year, sir, where we have paid out more than \$1 million in Unmet Needs. That \$1 million would not have been required if these people had been getting paid properly. We need Congress to be involved in this.

The Department of Defense is one element of the government, or a large element, but they can't influence legislation, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any further discussion? Seeing none, we shall vote on Resolution 435 up or down. All those in favor of approval of 435, vote by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "nays" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Commander-in-Chief Mueller, this concludes the report for the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: John, I thank you for your service. John, at this time I will dismiss your Committee and thank you for all of your hard work and what you have done serving on this Committee. I thank you for taking the time to do that.

I will now call upon the Subcommittee of the POW-MIA, Past Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith, for his report.

REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW-MIA

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, and may I say thank you for allowing me to serve on

this Committee. Commander-in-Chief Mueller, I am pleased to report that the POW-MIA Committee of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee convened at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, August 27, 2006.

Your instructions were followed. All members were present or accounted for and the actions were taken on the resolutions assigned to this Committee. I would like to take this time to thank the Vice-Chairmen of the POW-MIA Subcommittee, Past Commander-in-Chief Ed Banas from Connecticut, and Past Commander-in-Chief John Smart from New Hampshire. Their expertise and extensive knowledge of this issue was most valuable in our discussions.

I extend the Committee's gratitude and my personal appreciation to our Committee Advisor, Michael Wysong, Director of National Security and Foreign Affairs. A very special thank you is extended to all members of the POW-MIA Subcommittee for their genuine concern and active participation in our Committee deliberations.

We had one guest speaker at our meeting, Mr. Johnny Webb, Deputy Manager of the Joint POW-MIA Accounting Command in Hawaii. Mr. Webb presented an overview of the Joint POW-MIA Accounting Command's mission and their present activities and their future operations.

Commander-in-Chief, the Committee carefully reviewed and deliberated on each resolution. I will now outline the POW-MIA Subcommittee's recommendations. If any of the delegates to this convention would like a resolution set aside for discussion, please so indicate after I have completed the approval statement of the report and we move for adoption. We only have six resolutions. I will now read the resolution numbers that the Committee recommended for approval as submitted.

Resolution No. 401, POW/MIA Full Accounting Commitment and Agency Funding.

Resolution No. 402, POW/MIA Public Awareness.

Resolution No. 403, Drape the Caskets of Fallen American Warriors with the United States Flag.

No. 404, Assist Vietnam in the Recovery of Their MIAs.

No. 425, Full Funding for the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command.

I now move the adoption of these resolutions.

COMRADE MICHAEL WYSONG (Post 9503 – New Jersey): I second the motion for adoption.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you. Anyone wishing any of these to be set aside? Seeing no one at the microphone, we will now vote on these motions for approval. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The resolution that the Committee recommends for rejection and the reason, you will have an opportunity to move the adoption of this resolution under our convention rules. If no motion is made, the resolution is automatically rejected by the convention.

Resolution No. 426, Reinstate POW Status for Captured American Service Personnel. The reason for rejection, the resolution is not factual. POWs still is legal status of those captured. Missing captured is used as

accountability status. A POW would not be classified domestically as missing captured but would still have the status of a POW internationally. The Committee recommends rejection.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Is there anyone at the microphones? The Committee has recommended rejection. Seeing no response to that, it dies.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: That concludes the POW-MIA Subcommittee Report. Once again, Commander-in-Chief, thank you for appointing me as chairman.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: At this time I will dismiss your Subcommittee on POW-MIA and thank you for all the work you and your Committee have done. I especially want to thank you for all the work and all the different Committees you have been on here at the convention. Thanks for your service and support you have given me.

I am going to call on the Adjutant General to see if he has any announcements or anything to be made.

. . . Convention Announcement. . .

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: At this time I will call upon the National Chaplain, Dean Derieg. Comrades, please rise for the Benediction.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: Lord, as we come to the close of this business session, we ask only for your guidance and your protection as we seek to proclaim freedom, citizenship and the American way in our attempts to serve the Veterans of the United States. In his precious name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs will be here in the morning. This convention now stands in recess until 8:00 a.m. tomorrow morning. Thank you, comrades.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 3:55 o'clock p.m.)

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS BANQUET
MONDAY EVENING AUGUST 28, 2006

The Distinguished Guests Banquet of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, meeting in the Ballroom of the Hilton Hotel, Reno, Nevada, was called to order at 7:00 o'clock p.m., by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Gary Kurpius.

WELCOME

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the 107th VFW National Convention Banquet.

I am Gary Kurpius, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the VFW, and your Master of Ceremonies for this evening.

I hope all of you have enjoyed your day here in Reno. We are pleased to have all of you with us this evening, our VFW National and Department leaders, the Ladies Auxiliary leadership, but especially you, the members. We are also honored by the presence of our distinguished guests who will be introduced following dinner.

Please stand for our Invocation and remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem.

INVOCATION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: Before we start, I have an announcement to make. It is a simple one for those who are going to the Chaplain's Breakfast in the morning. We will meet at the south entrance at 6:15 and we will do our best to make it to the Post on Birch Street. We know the Lord will be with us one way or the other. Will you bow with me, please.

Our Great Father in heaven, you have given us this great opportunity to come together as an organization. Lord, we thank you for that. We thank you for all of the veterans that are in this place tonight, and all of those who left us. Lord, there are those that we have forgotten in times of joy so many times, those that we have left behind.

Tonight, Lord, before we begin we must remember who they are. There are comrades that are not able to be here for various reasons. We left them on a foreign shore, we left them in a muddy spot, we left them amongst a lot of noise. We have lost some this last year that are not here.

Lord, it is our responsibility to live a life that will exemplify you and this organization for them. Lord, tonight as we go about this help us to generate the joy of serving the greatest nation that has ever been. Lord, be with us as we go about this meal this evening and the fellowship. Thank you, Lord. In our Lord's precious name. Amen.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Kurpius led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the National Anthem.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Please be seated and enjoy your dinner.

(Whereupon, the dinner was served at this time.)

INTRODUCTION OF DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Comrades and Sisters, it is now my pleasure to introduce our head table guests. I shall begin at the lower tier and to my right. Please stand when you are introduced and remain standing, and the audience hold your applause until I have completed the lower tier.

VFW National Inspector, Dan Peterson and his wife, Carolyn, from Nebraska.

VFW National Chief of Staff, John Dahman and his wife, Merrilee, from Indiana.

VFW Judge Advocate General Richard Therrien and his guest, Nancy Lawrence, from New Hampshire.

National Senior Vice-President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW, Linda Meader and her husband, David, from New Hampshire.

Senior Director for the Army Historical Foundation, Retired Major General John Herrling and his wife, Marlene.

Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief designee of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Glen Gardner, and his wife, Jean, from Texas.

I am pleased to present the Secretary of the American Battle Monument Commission, Retired General Jack Nicholson, and National Senior of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ms. Virginia Carmen from Washington.

National Secretary-Treasurer of the Ladies Auxiliary, Celia Davis and her husband, Kenneth, from Missouri.

VFW National Surgeon Linda Fairbank and her husband from California.

VFW National Chaplain Dean Derieg, and his wife, Carolyn, from Oklahoma. Please give them a nice round of applause. (Applause)

I shall now introduce our distinguished guests at the upper tier. And to my left, the Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Larry Maher, and his wife, Judy, from Missouri.

I am sure you will agree our next guest has done an outstanding job as Chairman of the 107th VFW National Convention, Jack McMIndes, and his wife, Nancy, from Nevada.

The Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Allen "Gunner" Kent, and his wife, Becky, from Arizona.

I shall keep the next gentlemen, who will be introduced later on in the program. It is certainly my pleasure to present my wife, Nancy.

I shall keep the next two gentlemen who will also be introduced later in the program.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to present the lovely wife of our Commander-in-Chief, Patricia Mueller, from Missouri.

Also National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Sandy Germany from Alabama.

It is a distinct honor to present a member of the President's Cabinet, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable R. James Nicholson.

The Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, George Lisicki, and his wife, Gloria, from New Jersey.

It is certainly an honor to introduce this year's Armed Forces Award

recipient, Retired Army Lieutenant General Hal Moore.

I am pleased to introduce a Veteran War Correspondent and General Moore's co-author of the book "We Were Soldiers Once and Young", Mr. Joe Galloway. Please give them a nice round of applause. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: It is now my pleasure to introduce a gentleman who has served America's veterans for many years. It has been a privilege for me to be a part of his "Proud to Serve America's Veterans" leadership team for the past year. He has been a source of pride and inspiration to all of us.

I know that many others share in their gratitude for a man who has done so much for so many.

Jim is a man who has dedicated his entire adult life to the service of others. He is a staunch veterans' advocate, a tireless worker and is passionate in his beliefs.

Jim joined the VFW in 1970 at Post 5077 in O'Fallon, Missouri, where he maintains his life membership. He has served in various positions within the VFW, including Post Commander, Post Quartermaster, and in 1992-'93 he earned All-American Department Commander honors.

He has also served on many National Committees and as a National Council member in 1997-1999.

In August, 2005, Jim was elected Commander-in-Chief at the 106th National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jim served in the U.S. Army from 1966-'68 with the 446th Transportation Company, 57th Transportation Battalion. His unit played a key role in delivering essential supplies to combat ground and air units during the 1968 TET Offensive, as well as assistant U.S. Special Forces Evacuate Montagnard tribesmen from the area around Khe Sanh. He earned the Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and the National Defense Service Medal.

Jim is retired from the General Motors Parts Division where he was employed for 34 years.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join with me in welcoming our Commander-in-Chief, James R. Mueller.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

REMARKS – COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES MUELLER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you very much. It is an extreme pleasure to be here and breaking bread with all of you this evening. I have so much to be thankful for, to have such a wonderful group of individuals that are members of this organization. I have felt it these last three years, but what has been in my mind the most and I am the proudest of is the love that you have for our country and for our veterans.

I sometimes don't think you fully realize the thought that you had and the difference that you made in some members' lives and some of our country's lives. The outpour of generosity this past year with Hurricanes Rita and Katrina is something unbelievable.

After three weeks I went to visit different Post members and see some

of what happened. Your generosity is truly unbelievable. I think that is what makes us great in our country. When something does happen, we pull together, not only just 9/11. Thank you for the many courtesies extended to me these past three years. We love all of you.

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE LADIES AUXILIARY TO THE VFW

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

In her acceptance speech, she introduced her theme, "From Sea to Shining Sea, Freedom is not Free." Since the organization was founded in 1914, the members have conducted programs demonstrating their ability to work with the Veterans of Foreign Wars to create a harmony of service for our veterans.

During her term she has emphasized that the sacrifices made for our freedom must never be forgotten. She has demonstrated exceptional strength and commitment as she led the Ladies Auxiliary to a deeper commitment to veterans and their families.

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to work with her during the past year. It has been an experience both of us will always remember.

Please welcome from the great state of Alabama, the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Sandy Germany. (Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

REMARKS – LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT SANDY GERMANY

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GERMANY: Thank you. I can't see out there. Can you see me? You are wonderful. I have always said and you have heard me say this before if I could live this year over I would. It is very difficult sometimes to let people know exactly how you feel at any moment in time.

Having served with Jim Mueller has been one of the most wonderful years of my life. If I could have hand-picked the Commander to serve with, I couldn't have had anyone more gracious, any more caring, or any more cooperative than Jim Mueller. He has stood by my side as he has every Ladies Auxiliary member, as well as every veteran in this room, and as well as the nation. He has represented you with the most awesome sense of pride that anyone can ever dream of.

To you, the veterans in this room, it has been my pleasure to represent the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to be National President. They let me have the title because of what they felt about me. If I could only have let each and every one know how important they have been in my life.

Sometimes when things weren't going as well as I liked, there was always someone there, and that's what it is all about, not just in the good times but in the bad times, in the times that we have a shoulder. Sometimes you just need a wink of the eye or just to have someone look at you and smile. It makes all the difference in the world. It is up to you, my extended

family, you will always be that.

I will always cherish this year. This will be my last opportunity to speak to the joint Ladies Auxiliary and Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. So, from my heart to yours, thank you and I love you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW HALL OF FAME AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We are going to honor some very honored guests with us this evening. It is now our opportunity to honor them and thank them for their service.

With a career that spans more than 50 years, Charlie Daniels is an American music icon.

Mr. Daniels has been entertaining troops worldwide for some 35 years. A staunch supporter of the men and women in uniform, Mr. Daniels often has gone into harm's way, traveling to the most difficult and dangerous places of U.S. military operations to entertain the troops. And he does this so selflessly, refusing to accept even a penny for his services.

Mr. Daniels also continues to demonstrate his commitment to American service members here on the home front by performing at stateside military bases.

All of us admire his love for our country, his courage, his dedication and his steadfast spirit. Please welcome the recipient of the 2006 VFW Hall of Fame Award, music legend, Mr. Charlie Daniels.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: "The Hall of Fame Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Charlie Daniels.

"In recognition of his staunch support of soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, as evidenced by more than 35 years of entertaining service members worldwide.

"Often at great personal risk, Mr. Daniels has traveled in harm's way in order to entertain deployed service members. He has donated his time and energy to our troops without regard or thought of monetary compensation.

"He has devoted his talents selflessly to boost the morale of troops deployed to the most dangerous areas of the world. His continued dedication to those serving in the U.S. military earns him the title of 'patriot' and serves as an inspiration to all of us.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 28th day of August, 2006. Approved by the National Council of Administration." This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE – MR. CHARLIE DANIELS

MR. DANIELS: Thank you so very much. As our members know, on a blistering December sun in 1941 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, I was only five years old at the time and with the family engaged around the radio so solemn, I knew that something seriously was happening and something seriously was going on. Our nation, ill-prepared for war, and already burdened with the prospects of losing sons and daughters in the

battlefields of Europe, was facing a national nightmare, to try to wield the very existence of the United States. The axis were brilliant, powerful, but they picked the wrong country this time.

Even in the days when the war was going badly and the casualties were so high, and we were listening to FDR and Gabriel Heeter, and said our prayers knowing full well that no swastika rising sun would ever fly within the United States of America. I grew up at the Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima and firmly fixed in my young mind and the undying seas of patriotism applied in my heart and burned just as brightly in my seventy years as they did in those days.

I know what the veterans of this nation have done for America and I have no compassion for those who make light of the sacrifice of the men and women in uniform. I know your passion for patriotism. I know your devotion to beauty and I know your magnificent bravery because I have been among you.

I have been among you in Kosovo, I have been with you in Desert Storm. I have been with you in Bosnia and Baghdad, and I have stood on the 38th Parallel in Europe and Cuba, an imaginary line that separates freedom from captivity. I know deep down in my heart that those of us who have been divinely blessed to live in this land of the brave and home of the free owe an unpaying debt to those of you who have fought our wars and guarded our way of life, to those who have been at the lonely outposts of this planet.

I cannot be your brother in arms because I have never worn that uniform of valor, but I am your brother. As you present me tonight with this very prestigious award that I will always cherish, let me return and pay homage to you, my fellow citizens, my fellow Americans, my brothers and sisters.

So, it is with humility, gratitude and fond respect that I accept that. May almighty God bless each and every one of you and may God bless America. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: With this award is an honorarium of \$5,000. Mr. Daniels would like to present this \$5,000 check to go to his favorite charity, the Gilliam Home in Texas and the home run by a couple for handicapped children. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Tonight, we are honored to have with us the Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld.

Donald Rumsfeld attended Princeton University on academic and Navy ROTC scholarships, then served three years on active duty as a naval aviator before transferring to the Reserves, where he retired with the rank of Captain in 1989.

He has been a member of numerous presidential commissions and advisory committees, as well as the Chief Executive Officer, President and Chairman of several large corporations.

He has been a four-term U.S. Congressman from Illinois, an Ambassador to NATO, a White House Chief of Staff, and holds the

distinction of being both the youngest Secretary of Defense during the Ford Administration, and the oldest Secretary of Defense.

Today, he leads the largest federal department, the one that is ultimately responsible for every freedom our great country and its citizens enjoy.

He has directed America's response to the terrorist attacks on September 11th that have so far captured or killed two-thirds of known al-Qaeda leaders.

In the prosecution of the global war on terrorism, more than 25 million Afghans and 27 million Iraqis are now voting in free and independent elections.

Mr. Secretary, the people in this room, and those who are attending our 107th National Convention, are the elected leaders and representatives of 2.4 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Auxiliaries.

We may not have walked in your shoes, but our organization has been the boots-in-the-ground in this and in every previous war or conflict for every administration going back to the 25th President of the United States, William McKinley.

As the country's oldest major veterans organization, and as the largest organization of combat veterans in the nation, we and our families understand service and sacrifice.

We may never know how difficult it is to prosecute a global war while being repeatedly questioned or verbally fired upon by members of Congress and the media, but we do know that strength and unity in Washington directly impacts the morale of our troops on the ground.

In recognition of your contributions to the security and well-being of America, the VFW is honored to present to you the Dwight D. Eisenhower Award for distinguished service to our great nation.

Ladies and gentlemen, may I present to you the Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld.

(Whereupon, a prolonged standing ovation is had.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: "The Dwight D. Eisenhower Distinguished Service Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to Donald H. Rumsfeld, U.S. Secretary of Defense.

"In special recognition and sincere appreciation of his innumerable contributions to our nation through many years of distinguished military and public service. Secretary Rumsfeld's steadfast determination and leadership while directing the global war on terrorism has helped to inspire an entire nation. With an innate understanding of the realities, difficulties and requirements needed to defeat a determined enemy during time of war, he has served the nation as few others have. His service stands as a shining example to all Americans, and is true to the ideals, traditions and values of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 28th day of August, 2006. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

It is signed by Commander-in-Chief James R. Mueller and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

REMARKS – SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RUMSFELD

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RUMSFELD: Gary, Jim Mueller, thank you so very much. I thank you for that fine honor and I thank you for your service to this organization, and I thank you for your service to our country. Sandy Germany and Linda Meader, members of the Ladies Auxiliary, thank you for all you do.

Mr. Secretary Nicholson, it is good to see you here. I have not had a chance to thank you in front of this group of veterans for all you do and all your Department does for our veterans. You know, if I could sing I would have sung the Star Spangled Banner exactly the way you did. He is quite a guy.

I don't know if it is true, but I am told that he heard that I was the only one at the head table without a white coat, so he went upstairs, took off his white coat, got dressed like that and came down.

Charlie Daniels, thank you so much for what you do for servicemen and women and their families and the country. God bless you.

I am very pleased to be here and to be with you and thank you each for not just your service to our country as veterans but also the wonderful contributions you make in support of troops and in support of your families. You and I have a chance to talk about that some this evening, and it is impressive that compassion, generosity and the determination of you as individuals and your organization is deeply appreciated.

Recently, I witnessed still another example of your selfless service. When the troops touch down for the first time on U.S. soil, when the men come back, they invariably find at almost any hour of the day and night volunteers from the VFW. One sergeant returning from Iraq, when he walked off the plane in Bangor, Maine, at 3:00 o'clock in the morning, were you there? He saw a group of VFW volunteers.

They were there at the airport lined up to shake his hand. He said, "As I made my way through the line, each man thanking me for my service, I choked back my tears. We soon learned this VFW group had not only waited for more than a day in the airport for one arrival, but they were doing so for all returning soldiers. When the time came to fly home to Colorado, we were asked by our Commander if we would like to join the VFW. Every hand went up."

Thank goodness for those brave American troops and also thank the good Lord that Americans like you are there to greet them. Such service has deep roots in our nation. A few years back a book was written by a group of people in North Platte, Nebraska, during World War II.

It seems the trains were transporting young G.I. guys to battlefields in Europe and the Pacific, and they frequently stopped in North Platte, and the townspeople would gather to greet them and wish them well, and tell them how proud their country was.

Over time, the people of North Platte would greet a good number of the hundreds of thousands of young Americans going off to war in one direction or the other, and what a wonderful tribute it was to those in uniform. You can really draw a straight line from those folks to each of you and to the tribute you offered to those who follow the flag of our nation to battle.

We have seen that flag wave in times of triumph, we have seen it wave in times of tragedy, a symbol of a great nation and of a larger call. Our troops display that flag proudly on their uniforms. They honor the flag of their fathers, they salute it, fight for it and serve it proudly.

It is the honor of my life to have the privilege of working with these amazing young men and women in uniform today. It is an honor to serve the President, not only who respects our flag but is determined to protect it.

Commander-in-Chief Jim, I am honored to be this year's recipient of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Service Award. I actually have been around so long, but I was a young fellow, 29 years old, I was running for Congress in the State of Illinois back in 1962, and Dwight Eisenhower came to town. And I can tell you when you are 29 and running for Congress and former President Eisenhower gives you a boost in your campaign, you will never forget it.

Few leaders, after all, have had more to do with shaping the security of our twentieth century. The vast experiences helped him to keep his sense of balance and perspective. After he was elected President, someone from the press told brand new President Eisenhower from now on he could expect to be the target of political attacks. He reminded them saying, "I have been shot at before."

I am told after he left office his brother, Milton, was worrying terribly about bad weather was approaching and ruining the speech that President Eisenhower was about to give. An unphased General Eisenhower told Milton, "I have not worried about the weather since June 6, 1944." I think that is a wonderful lesson about keeping things in perspective.

I do worry about the importance of perspectives in our national by-laws today, the perspective of history as we face the new challenges, asymmetric, and the regular threats we face. We are really fighting the first war of the twenty-first century, the first war that has been fought in the new media outlets, the 24-hour talk radio, the Internet, e-mails, video sessions, video cameras, digital cameras, and things speed around the world so rapidly.

Troops, generally it takes a long time to catch up with pictures. The men and women of the VFW know you have not only lived history but you helped to make history. You not only understand warfare, but many of you have helped to transform the way wars are formed. You know the price of freedom because you have risked your lives, shed blood, lost friends in freedom of defense.

Today, we are engaged in conflicts today that are again testing whether or not our country believes that the defense of liberty is worth the cost. As we have seen recently, our enemy is eager to strike again on a massive scale. They wanted to blow up ten or twelve airlines flying from England to the United States very recently. They are in our lives constantly, almost totally without our knowledge.

They portray our cause as a war against Islam, when, in fact, the overwhelming majority of the victims of their terrorists have been the thousands and thousands of innocent Muslim, men, women and children that they have killed as our forces try to protect the innocent of their shields.

As our troops strive to obey the laws of warfare, the enemy uses those laws against us. As our troops are held to the standards of near perfection,

the enemy is held to no standard at all. While some at home are tossing in the towel, the enemy is waiting and hoping that we will do just that.

Early on, I learned from my dad, who was a World War II veteran, served in the Pacific on an aircraft carrier, he said to me one time when I was thinking of leaving the Boy Scouts. He said, "Fine. You can quit. The only problem is if you start quitting, pretty soon you are a quitter. That is not a proud thing to be."

I believe the American people have the steel and grit. When America faced the costly defeat in the Pacific after the attack on Pearl Harbor, our country did not lose hope. They didn't throw in the towel. When U.S. Marines were asked to capture that small island in the Pacific, that lost over 7,000 men in 40 days of fierce fighting, they didn't stop until the flag was flying over Iwo Jima.

Today, we will not tell 50 million Afghans and Iraqis because the going is tough, and it is tough, let there be no doubt, that we will abandon them to beheaders, the terrorists, the assassins and the twenty-first century fascists who seek to attack us abroad and at home.

History has shown time and again that Americans have the patience and the perseverance to see it through no matter how hard or how difficult, that we prevail. The result of that perseverance is a safer and more secure world. Many who have served in Korea, in fact, my guess is that many of you have served on the Korean Peninsula. I think you can see it on the screen.

The same Korean people are in the north as in the south, the same resources are in the north and the south. The north fly zone is flat. South of it you see life everywhere. The only piece of life you see in here is the trend of light in Pun Chang. In the south, you have a country, and in the south, I believe is the tenth or twelfth largest, strongest economy on the face of the earth.

In the north, they are taking people into military who are four feet ten inches tall and weigh less than 100 pounds because of malnutrition. The difference is very simply twofold. First, in the north they have a dictatorship system and in the south they have a free economic system, and the other difference is that those of you here and others who didn't come home helped that country be free, and as a result the people of South Korea have prospered and certainly the success in the south is the sacrifice of those who served in that conflict.

Men and women in this room helped to make that possible for the 50 million Korean people. You know, some people called the Korean War the forgotten war. Well, it is not forgotten, it is not by me, not by the families of the 36,000 who died fighting in that war, and not by the Korean people who today are our allies in the global struggle against violent extremes.

There is another war that is fought by many of you including the Commander Jim, who also deserve mentioning. Those who served in Vietnam took part in important battles against Communist aggression. Thank heaven, our nation and history increasingly appreciates their important contributions, and that today they stand proudly with every other generation of Americans.

Surely by now we have learned our lesson, that when our country gives

troops a mission, they should have the resources and the support to finish the job. Surely, we have learned the danger of giving the enemy the false impression that the American people cannot stomach that tough fight.

It was after the U.S. forces left Somalia in 1994 that Osama bin Laden, that the American forces, to use his word, paper type. There were reports that Sadaam Hussein gave copies of the film "Black Hawk Down" about the difficulties in Somalia to his commanders as an example of American weakness.

Now, today is the fate about the wars being waged in Afghanistan, Iraq and the larger struggle against extremists throughout the world. Today we could be helping and certainly in a free system we expect it. But we must face the fact that the extremists have media means.

They time their attacks, they pick their targets for the maximum media exposure. They hide amongst the civilians precisely to distort the debate, to manipulate the U.S., hoping they will focus on the violence with the terrorists and create not the progress that is being made against the terrorists.

In Iraq, a country that was brutalized by a crew and a dangerous dictatorship are undertaking the slow and uncertain steps trying to secure a new future under a representative government. Once that is a government that will be at peace to its neighbors rather than a threat to them and others.

The extremists openly called the Iraq, going on in Iraq today as the assault on the war on terror, and who needs it? It is so that even today there are many here at home who would argue the contrary. Today there is a full focus on setbacks. Scrutiny is important, mistakes can be fixed and corrections made, but some semblance of balance is needed.

You, as veterans, are uniquely qualified to remind the American people that there are setbacks and difficulties in every war throughout our nation's history. There have always been those arguing that America is on the wrong side or on the losing side.

When Hitler was bombing London in 1940, a former Ambassador came home and declared that democracy is finished in England. He said it may be finished here as well. Think of that. Today World War II is remembered as very patriotic, and it was. It was ugly, it was hard, it was long, it was tough.

Imagine what in today's 24-hour news media world might have done with the many problems and difficulties that were faced in World War II. For example, the allies that suffered some 70,000 casualties in one campaign in Africa alone. In 1946, one year after the Nazis surrendered and the allies sought to rebuilt post-war Germany, a New York Times article said, "The United States has fumbled the job."

Life magazine declared, "Never has American prestige in Europe been lower. All we have brought to Europe so far is confusion." Does any of that sound familiar? Think of the Cold War. A Washington Post columnist recently described the period of the Cold War as a time "when there was an easily-defined enemy and the free world held the United States in high esteem."

But that just wasn't how it was. In those days, the truth is that millions of people marched from time to time not against the Soviet Union, but against the United States. Remember, Communism was real fashionable and people said not to worry about the Soviet Union and Communists.

There were men in the Congress that said bring the men home. It is taking too long to deal with the Cold War. We can't prevail anyway. At that time most of those folks were summed up with a simple phrase, "Blame America first." Well, we must keep a "Blame America First" mentality from undermining our efforts today in another long war against a deterrent enemy.

There are always times in history when it seems easier to some to give up, but the great story of America is one of grit, it is one of determination, and it is one of victory. Americans did not cross oceans and suffer wounds and build histories for the greatest democracy only to run away from murderers and extremists, those who try to kill everyone they cannot convert and who try to tear down that which they can never build themselves.

When President Eisenhower sat down to write his memoir at his farm in Pennsylvania, I am told when the President went to the County Clerk in Gettysburg and said I want to buy this little piece of farmland, and the clerk looked at him and said, "Well, Mr. President, you were a famous General and President of the United States, and you are not the President. Why would you want to buy that little rundown farm in Gettysburg?"

He said very simply, "I want to take something and make it better with my own hands for the first time." Apparently, when he was at his farm, he looked down on the battlefields of Gettysburg and he reflected on those young men who gave their last breath so that the nation in Lincoln's words shall have a newer birth of freedom.

He said the great battles of history are often remembered in history for their strategic brilliance or the opposite, or as clashes between great powers where, in fact, he said wars are won on the initiative, the fidelity, the strength of many thousands of individuals known only to their immediate comrades in battle.

Their names are forgotten today on the field men found themselves the sources of courage, of leadership, of greatness, that they had not known before. Americans must always remember that we stand here today because of you, because of the people in this room, because of men and women like you who stood firm, who stormed beaches and who found greatness who they had not known before.

For that, our nation thanks you, and because of that and because of you a new generation of heroes is inspired to carry forward in the cause of the safer and freer new world. Thank you so much and God bless each one of you.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank goodness. I will say that unequivocally. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for attending the banquet this evening. I will call upon the National Chaplain Dean Derieg for the Benediction.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: It is hard to stand in a place like this with 13 stripes and a field of blue. I would like to close tonight simply with the words that were brought to me from a couple of friends of mine and that was this:



"I bought a flag one day. It only cost a dime. It didn't cost much. I waved it everywhere I could until finally I lost it, but it didn't cost much. It only cost a dime.

"But I bought a flag the other day, it decorated my college dorm and the back of my old divan. What does it matter? It is ragged, it didn't cost much. I don't know where it is now.

"But I bought a flag the other day, and the price of that flag was quite high, and some day that flag will decorate the coffin in which I lie. Yes, the cost was quite high.

"But I bought a flag the other day, and the price was more than I can bear and ever wanted to pay. But the price of that flag was the blood of my only son and the price is more than I wanted to pay."

Dear Lord, we ask simply that you continue to give us men and women who are willing to give their lives for this flag. Lord, we thank you for a nation for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible.

Lord, we thank you that we have been given the honor to serve and to live under this wonderful flag. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 9:15 o'clock p.m.)



SECOND BUSINESS SESSION
TUESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2006

(The Second Business Session of the 107th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was called to order in the Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Reno, Nevada, at 8:00 o'clock a.m., by Commander-in-Chief James Mueller.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I will now reconvene the 107th VFW National Convention. At this time we will call on National Chaplain Dean Derieg for the prayer.

OPENING PRAYER

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: We thank you so very much for an opportunity to come together, to do the business of the greatest veterans organization in this world. Father, we thank you. We ask that you guide us, direct us, lead us, and, Lord, we also ask this morning that you again continue to be with our troops wherever they may be. Give them your protection and let them know that you are in their presence. For we ask it in our precious Lord's name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(Whereupon, the assembly was led in the Pledge of Allegiance at this time.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Chief, your order has been obeyed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you. Please be seated. I will now call upon Dave Butters for the report of the Credentials Committee.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE DAVID BUTTERS (Post 475 – Delaware): As of the close of business yesterday, 4:00 p.m., August 28, 2006, the total delegate strength is 10,559. The total Department Commanders, 45. The total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 32. The total National Officers, 38. That is for a grand total of 10,674.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, Dave, and I thank you and your Committee for all the work you do on this Committee.

PRESENTATION TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER
BY THE 2005-2006 DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: At this time we will have a presentation by Past State Commander Jim Holmes from Missouri and the 2005-2006 Department Commanders to Commander-in-Chief Mueller.

COMRADE JAMES HOLME (Department of Missouri): Commander-in-

Chief, on behalf of the 2005-2006 "Proud to Serve Team", we would like to present you with a little token of our appreciation, and I hope that you will remember it and it will help you remember us.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, Jim. To all my Department Commanders, I don't think you could have presented me anything other than what you have that I probably would have enjoyed more. I will carry this and put this in my office. It has been an extreme pleasure to serve with all of you and I again thank each and every one of you for giving me the opportunity to help me fulfill the promises I made in Vietnam to serve veterans and their families.

I am very proud of each and every one of you. Thank you for what you do. God bless you and I wish you the best in the future. I hope we continue to have a relationship for many, many years to come. Thank you.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: We have a presentation at this time by Jim Chancellor.

PRESENTATION BY JIM CHANCELLOR TO
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER

COMRADE JIM CHANCELLOR: Thank you very much for allowing me to speak to you this morning before I make this very special presentation. In 1971, I served with the 119th Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam. I was shot down in my helicopter and received a Purple Heart and a Heroism Medal for Valor. But that is really not important this morning, it is what has happened after that that is really important.

When I first came home from the war, I went right to work. I started a company called Chancellor Builders. I built new homes in Northwest Indiana. Everyone here who knows the construction field and the self-employment field, you know it is long hours and hard work. But I was young and I was tough, and I didn't need any help.

At that time I also became a veterans advocate, speaking at high schools and colleges on post-traumatic stress. But as you all know here also, life begins to get hard. My right wrist began to ache and my back became a physical problem. So, I finally followed my own advice and went to the V.A. As it turned out, my right wrist was injured in that helicopter crash in 1970.

They made my back service connected, they operated on my knee. All of this because of my service to this great country that we all call home. Did all of this come free? Was there a price for this? Yes, I wasn't denied those benefits because of my service, but it absolutely was not free.

These benefits were earned on the backs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Time and time again we have fought for the rights of our veterans. Time and time again we have stepped up to the plate. Just as I was tough and young and ready to go, I have matured just as the VFW has matured.

At one time the VFW used to pound their fist and demand. Now, maybe we have matured and we are a little softer. Just as I needed help from the VA to continue my construction field, we need the help of the younger veterans. We need their get up and go. We need to teach them to fight not with guns and battle lines, but with determination and lobbying

powers.

We need to lead them as we follow them. We need to talk to them as we listen to them. We need to make them know and teach them how important it is that they become involved in our organization. We need new ideas, we need to speak out of the box.

We need to win this fight, comrades, this fight about our membership. It is not up to the young veterans, it is up to the old guard. It is up to people like us to bring them in to the VFW so they can continue our fight. Our motto should be "Whatever It Takes."

There are 26 million civilian veterans. We need to go after them all. We need to work as hard as possible to bring them in to the VFW. Perhaps we should entice Life Members with passes to our local YMCAs. Maybe we could trade some empty bar stools for a work-out room or computer room for these new high-tech veterans.

Maybe we could start to come together and we could talk to each other. We can teach them about yesterday as we listen to them about tomorrow. Wouldn't that be great? Perhaps a mock boot camp with our local authorities for teenage offenders run by our tough young veterans. Whatever it takes, we need to get the job done.

In my 20 years of working with veterans, I have learned many things. The one thing I am sure of that a veteran is not very quick or doesn't jump quick to help themselves. But if you ask him to help another veteran, he is there. He is there as quick as he can be because we have this brotherhood bond between us that we all share.

We can't lay back and say it is up to them. Comrades, it is up to us to bring them here. So, let's get this job done. Now, those were some ideas on our younger veterans. Just a couple of ideas on our older veterans that we also need to go after.

We will go after them with good positive community participations. We will work with our local schools. We seek input from them on local surveys. We use our computers to link us together in the communities with newsletters, and we ask them to help us, help the younger veterans.

Now, before I make this presentation I want to tell you that I personally don't need the Iraq veterans and the Afghan veterans, and our freedom fighters. My benefits were earned by the World War II and Korean veterans. Our young veterans need to understand that my grandson, Scott Austin, will serve one day and the VFW needs to be there for him.

They need to understand that what they do and what we do in our organization is for our future veterans. So, let's make every effort we can to bring them into the fold and bring them home to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Now, we are making this presentation. It is very difficult to talk about our Commander-in-Chief. But if you attended the banquet last night, you heard wonderful praise about him. It is difficult to tell you about his courage and his leadership.

You-all know that he served in the Army in 1966 and 1968. He was in the Caisson battle. Not only does he volunteer his time to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, he is O'Fallon's Volunteer of the Year. He stepped up, he has led us, he has done whatever it takes to lead this organization in the right direction.

If gives me great pleasure to make this presentation of the Vietnam veteran's ring from the American veterans collection to our Commander-in-Chief, Jim Mueller.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Mr. Chancellor, thank you for that beautiful presentation, and I will cherish that and will wear this ring often.

INTRODUCTION OF SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE MOC

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: A trip to almost any VA Hospital will reveal the importance of the work of the Military Order of the Cootie. Each year the Cooties spend thousands of hours bringing comfort to our hospitalized veterans. Their commitment to "Keep 'em Smiling in Beds of White" is a grand tribute to the service and sacrifice of all veterans.

Our next guest was elected Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie at that organization's 86th Supreme Scratch in Salt Lake City in August of 2005.

Please welcome the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States of America, Terrance P. "Shorty" Lyons.

REMARKS - MOC SUPREME COMMANDER LYONS

MOC SUPREME COMMANDER LYONS: Thank you, Chief. Believe it or not, they even have a stool up there. Can you believe that? (Laughter)

Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Fellow Comrades, and some of you out there are Cooties: As you all know, we do quite a bit. Besides the hospital we do the National Home. This year's project is a two-year project. Myself and my fellow soon to be gold hat Supreme Commander, incoming, Ray Fern, took on the national challenge of replacing the street-lights at the National Home, a total of \$35,000, with \$17,500 this year and \$17,500 next year.

The VFW Booster Program, of course, is one of our big ones. In direct cash donations to VFW Posts this year was \$415,530.85. The Cooties worked on a total of 27,389 projects for the VFW Posts. Cooties worked 241,798 combined hours on different VFW Post project, which means the average Cootie worked at least ten hours in their Post on various projects.

The Cooties recruited over 10,312 members, new and reinstated. We did not count MIPS this year. If we did, we would probably have gone way over 15,000. Also, we didn't count the fact that with the National Home Board of Trustees, we have four working Cooties that do that, and we don't even count that under VFW boosters. Maybe we ought to.

In the hospitals this year, the Cooties achieved \$5,133,790 in hospital credits from the VA, plus another \$1.5 million in domiciliary and state facilities in hospital credits. This amounts to \$280 per Cootie this year in hospitals alone.

And, finally, we achieved growth this year with eight new or reinstated Pup Tents. We brought in a brand new Grand, the Grand of Delaware. This combined achieved 100.32 percent that you Cooties have done for this organization, the Cooties and helped the parent organization. Will the Cooties please rise that are in the audience? (Applause) Chief, there are

your workers.

In closing, thank you very much. It has been a pleasure working with you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: "Shorty", I know our paths have not crossed that much this year, and I wish it would have been better than that. I personally want to thank the MOC and the MOCA for all the work they have done. I am proud to say that I am a member of Pup Tent 5 in St. Charles – O'Fallon. Thank you again and all the members of the MOC and MOCA.

MOC SUPREME COMMANDER LYONS: Thank you, Chief.

PATRIOTS PIN DONATION

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Commander, we now have two representatives from the Department of Maine, Department Commander Tom Lussier, and Department Senior Vice Commander James Bachelder here to make a presentation to the Patriots Pin Program.

COMRADE TOM LUSSIER (Department of Maine): I would like to introduce Jim Bachelder, my Senior Vice Commander, to make this presentation, please.

COMRADE JAMES BACHELDER (Department of Maine): Thank you, sir. Chief, VFW Post 9935 of Sanford, Maine, and their Auxiliary would like to present a check for \$10,000 for the Patriots Pin Award.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: You will be establishing a scholarship in your name.

COMRADE JAMES BACHELDER (Department of Maine): As the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Department of Maine, my Post is challenging all Departments' Senior Vice Commanders within the next two years, when we are in Orlando, that we have an award for every state winner in the Patriots Pin Program. That is a challenge which we are trying out today and we are putting our money where our mouth is.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, Jim. Thank you very much. I hope this will continue and everybody else will take this to heart.

COMRADE JAMES BACHELDER (Department of Maine): I have been asked to restate the challenge. The challenge is that the Sanford-Springfield Memorial Post 9935 and its Auxiliaries is challenging every Department Senior Vice Commander within the next two years, when we are in Orlando, to ensure that we have a Patriots Pin National Award for every Department winner. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: The best of luck in that, Tom.

COMRADE TOM LUSSIER (Department of Maine): Thank you, Chief.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, at this time it gives me a great deal of pleasure to welcome the Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera who is here to make a presentation to the Patriots Pin Program. Past Commander-in-Chief Spera.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA: Thank you very much, "Gunner". Several years ago, the members of my Post realized that we were having a great deal of difficulty maintaining a Post building, and we tried to decide what we were going to do.

We got all of the discussions about everybody is going to get a piece of

it, and we got rid of that real quick. The Post members made a decision, and we took the money and we put it into the North End Post 144 Charitable Trust. In the last several years, we have donated in excess of \$150,000 to various charities.

Included in that, to date, we have donated \$55,000 to the Patriots Pin. We now have the third place Patriots Pin prize of \$5,500. I am very proud today to have my Post members and my Post Commander to come up here and join me.

My Post Commander, Christian Kwikoski, will now make a presentation to the Commander-in-Chief on the Patriots Pin.

COMRADE CHRISTIAN KWIKOSKI (Post 144 – Massachusetts): Good morning, Commander-in-Chief. On behalf of North End VFW Post 144 and Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera, I present you with this check for \$45,000 for the first place prize for the Patriots Pin.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA: That is \$50,000, and we are now the first place prize for the Patriots Pin.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you to Post 144.

INTRODUCTION OF MR. JOE GALLOWAY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, General Norman Schwarzkopf once called our next speaker “the finest combat correspondent of our generation, a soldier’s reporter and a soldier’s friend.”

In November, 1965, Joe Galloway was a 24-year-old UPI reporter when he hooked up with then Lieutenant Colonel Hal Moore, who commanded the 1st Battalion of the 7th Cavalry in a place called the Ia Drang Valley.

What followed was three days of intense close-quarters combat between 450 American soldiers and an estimated 2,000 North Vietnamese regulars. The details of the first major battle in America’s longest war were detailed in the book “We Were Soldiers Once and Young” that Joe co-authored with Hal Moore.

Joe has been a senior military reporter now for more than four decades for news organizations ranging from UPI and Knight Ridder newspapers, to U.S. News & World Report magazine, and now McClatchy newspapers.

To paraphrase some of Joe’s own writings, a reporter cannot always remain a witness who remains above and removed from the story he is covering. I have heard the command “fix bayonets!” and saw men use those bayonets on other men. I have carried both the wounded and dead and hauled ammo and water and, yes, on occasion, I had to put down my camera and pick up my rifle and use it.

Joe, you were absolutely correct when you wrote “none of us who survived left there the same man he was when he arrived.”

Comrades, I present to you the only civilian to be presented a Bronze Star with “V” Device by the Army in that war, a former recipient of the VFW Media Award who is here to talk about the National Museum of the United States Army, Mr. Joe Galloway.

ARMY MEMORIAL PROJECT

MR. GALLOWAY: This is Joe Galloway. He “ain’t” (indicating).

COMRADE HAL MOORE: Joe and I want to take a few minutes to talk to you about soldiers, soldiers in the Army's plans to honor their selfless service and personal sacrifices in a very unique and meaningful way. You may not realize this, but our country is the only major world power and the U.S. Army is the only one of our services that does not have a national museum or a national monument to honor its soldiers and Army veterans.

For far too long the Army has lacked an appropriate central place to tell both its story and the soldiers' stories that exemplify the indomitable spirit that has so clearly defined the American character since 1775. That's all going to change. There is now time that the Army story is told, there is time to say thanks to the 14 generations of American soldiers whose leadership qualities and selfless sacrifices have forged and safeguarded our nation for over two centuries, 200 years. They have answered the call to duty and we will remain forever in their debt.

MR. GALLOWAY: For over 230 years, from Concorde's Bridge to Baghdad, the United States Army has been on the front lines of the fight to preserve and protect the American freedom and democracy. Millions of American soldiers have fought in 11 wars and 178 campaigns.

They have participated in countless peace-keeping and nation-building missions at home and abroad. As General Moore said, their stories of personal sacrifice and selfless service have for the most part gone unacknowledged and untold. That simple but important fact along with the genuine love of soldiers is what originally drove General Moore and me to tell the stories of those who fought so valiantly and those who died so bravely during the savage battle of Ia Dang in our book "We Were Soldiers Once and Young." We are working on the sequel to that book, and once again we are going to be telling soldiers' stories.

GENERAL MOORE: While we are working on our book of soldiers' stories, the Army is working on plans for building the National Museum of the U.S. Army at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, to tell its story in an innovative and important way through the eyes and in the words of soldiers, past, present and future.

At last year's convention, you passed VFW Resolution No. 203 to support building the museum. This year Joe and I are here to tell you more about it. One of its most important components, the registry of the American Soldier. The museum, which is a long overdue tribute, will preserve a legacy, the rich history of the Army.

It will provide a million visitors annually with an appreciation of the Army's contributions to the nation. It is going to present the Army in its total contention, placing the American soldier and Army veteran in the rightful position as a historical cornerstone on which our country was built and has grown and prospered. It is going to be built at Fort Belvoir in Virginia, just south of Washington, and 20 minutes or so from important monuments.

Many of you are already familiar with true personal visits, like the Korean Wall, the Veterans Memorial, and the World War II Memorial. The museum will also be just about ten minutes from historic Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington, the Army's first commander-in-chief.

The projected date for ground breaking is 2009, and the opening is currently scheduled for celebration of the Army's 238th birthday. So all American soldiers and Army veterans, whether they served in the active or the

Reserves or the National Guard will finally have what they have never had before, a home of their own.

This museum will be the one place where they will want their families, their friends and every American citizen to visit, to learn about and connect with and share in the achievements of the U.S. Army.

MR. GALLOWAY: The National Army Museum will illustrate how the Army's history is integrated, interwoven through all aspects of the American experience. The Army is a reflection of the American people and its history is a part of the American story, and an important part at that. To understand ourselves, our country and our culture, we can learn much from our Army and its soldiers, past, present and future.

Their history is our history, told from a unique and remarkable perspective that is at times triumphant and at other times terrible. The museum's clearly-defined mission to expand public understanding of our Army will result in a blend of state-of-the-art exhibits, and a wide range of exciting events and educational programs.

By cultivating an appreciation for Army history and Army values on a national scale, the museum will give the American people a unique opportunity to connect with the Army's story. Based on candid and recorded accounts of men and women who have worn the uniform, visitors will learn the four most important characteristics of yesterday's and today's American soldier: service, sacrifice, duty, initiative, ingenuity, resilience, honor and courage. Those represent the most distinguishing features of our national character.

GENERAL MOORE: We are here to tell you that the National Army Museum will be far, far more than a museum with display cases. It will be a total experience. It will tell the small personal stories of combat heroes. It will relate the epic descriptions of our great battles and it will reveal little-known facts about the Army's contributions to science, to medicine, to exploration, and the American quality of life. It will show the evolution of the U.S. Army as part of and contributing to America's social and cultural growth.

MR. GALLOWAY: A cadre of professionally-trained interpreters will bring to life the experience of soldiers through life enactments. Now, comrades, the presentations, using historically-active uniforms, props and real Army language is going to be interesting, will provide visitors a sense of the human reality that makes up history. It will educate and enlighten as well as surprise and impress. It will teach, fascinate and entertain. It will engage the imagination and curiosity of visitors, answering probing questions and stimulating a desire to learn more.

GENERAL MOORE: The museum will use the most modern technology, simulations, display techniques and interactive methods. Visitors will experience what it is like to drive an Abrams M-1 main battle tank, to fly an Apache Helicopter at the nap of the earth, to load a musket, experience a jungle Medivac extraction, and see through night vision goggles. These are the kind of hands-on experiences that the museum will feature.

While the stress and exhilaration of battle, the wonder of exploration or the tedium of garrison duty remain fairly constant through time, the principle variables are the soldiers, and the quality of their leaders and their training and equipment.

We are all veterans. We know the business of war and peace like

nobody else in the USA. Understanding the life of soldiers takes an understanding of the war, how they lived, how they talked, how they smelled and how they were trained and lived, and who they fought or helped and why.

MR. GALLOWAY: As the capstone of over 120 branch, regional and other museums in the Army museum system, the National Army Museum's 30 galleries will show case selected materials from the Army's collections. These holdings include over 750,000 artifacts and 15,000 original drawings and paintings, as well as original film footage, weapons, equipment and documents of great significance.

What visitors will see will span time from the present revolutionary militia period to the modern Army now fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. Since the main exhibit building and its 30 gallery exhibits, the museum complex will include a parade ground, vehicle and tactical demonstration area, an amphitheater and a memorial garden to honor all who have fallen defending our freedom.

GENERAL MOORE: There is one other very important component of the National Museum that we want to tell you about, and that's the registry of the American soldiers. Not only do we want to tell you about it, we want you to take advantage of it if you have not already.

The registry is an essential historical link between those who have served and the American public. It is currently managed by the Army's Historical Foundation and is successful now online. Eventually, it will be permanently enshrined at the National Army Museum, where it will be a focal point for visitors.

The registry is your opportunity to tell your story or your Army service in your own words. We all have a story to tell and we want you to tell it in your words. Your recollections and your personal experiences will bring Army history to life and make it memorable for all future generations.

MR. GALLOWAY: So far nearly 25,000 currently serving soldiers and Army veterans have entered their names, ranks, hometowns, and their personal service history on to that registry. Enrollment is free, and General Moore and I hope you will take the time during this convention to visit the Army Historical Foundation booth in the exhibition area and enroll. Take the time. It is just a few minutes. You can also enroll any relative or friend living or deceased who has had Army service.

GENERAL MOORE: In closing, I just want to say that Joe and I are very proud to be advocates for the National Army Museum. We are here to promote this morning the museum's awareness on behalf of the Army Historical Foundation, the private non-profit organization that the Secretary of the Army has designated to spearhead the capital campaign for the museum.

The Army is planning, planning and providing staff for the project, and providing the land for the museum. The foundation has the task of raising the remaining \$200 million from the private sector. This project is an important and long-overdue tribute to the Army and to its current and former members.

All of you here are veterans and many of you were soldiers. Regardless of your service affiliation, help us build the awareness of this worthy project. Go back and talk it up with the members of your State Departments of your Posts. Tell members of your community about it. Tell fellow Army

veterans about the museum and the registry.

We create an atmosphere of excitement, an aura of esteem and respect for the soldiers who have served our country. Please do all you can to help the Army Historical Foundation build the National Army Museum. Thank you for your time.

MR. GALLOWAY: Yes, thank you. Thank you for your service to our country, thank you for sharing our belief that the men and women of the world's most respected and capable ground force, the United States Army, deserves a world-class museum dedicated to their service and sacrifice.

The National Army Museum now is a vision and a challenge. With your support, it will soon become a reality we can all be proud to call our own. Thank you. God bless you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Mr. Galloway, to you and General Moore, thank you for being here. Comrades, I am going to offer a challenge to you. I would ask when you leave here to please go home and maybe try and plan some kind of fund-raiser to raise money for this. Take the time to do that. I think we have a proud tradition with that. I ask you as you go back try and plan a fund-raiser to make a donation. Thank you. Thanks for being here.

GENERAL MOORE: Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, at this time, I would like to invite all the first-timers attending this convention to rise and be recognized. Anyone attending the convention for the first time, please rise. Let's give them a warm welcome. (Applause) I hope we see you at a lot more of these and that you will enjoy these conventions and come back.

I now would like to recognize our World War II veterans that are in the audience. There are only approximately 3.5 million left. That will be decreasing over the next three to five years, the greatest generation there ever was. The World War II veterans that are in the audience, will you please stand and be recognized. (Applause) Thank you, my comrades.

Just recently, within the last month, I had the opportunity to travel to Korea and go up on the DMZ. At this time would the Korean veterans that served, please stand and be recognized. (Applause)

The next group of individuals, I am proud to say I am a member. Also within the last month, I had the opportunity to go back to Vietnam. Things have changed, but yet they haven't. It is no longer communism, it is capitalism and it is the riding of the tiger, and they don't know how to get off of it. The Vietnam veterans in the audience, will you please rise and be recognized. (Applause) Thank you, my comrades.

The next group that I would like to recognize is our Desert Storm veterans. Will all the Desert Storm veterans that are in the audience, please stand and be recognized. (Applause)

The next group I would like to recognize is a group that I had the pleasure in February to travel to visit with some of them, the Iraqi veterans and the Afghan veterans. Will you please stand and be recognized. (Applause) Some day this organization will be run by many of you, and perhaps very soon one of you could be Commander-in-Chief.

At this time I would also like to recognize all the veterans that have served in Somalia, Grenada, Panama, and in all other conflicts that I have not mentioned. Will you please stand and be recognized. (Applause)

Thank you, my comrades, for the love that you have given because of your belief in your God, your country and family values, and for carrying those values on.

INTRODUCTION OF JAMES NICHOLSON, SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is now my honor to introduce the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Jim Nicholson. He is a graduate of West Point, who served eight years as an Army Ranger and Paratrooper, then 22 years in the Army Reserve, where he retired at the rank of Colonel.

He is a Vietnam combat veteran who was awarded the Bronze Star and the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

He was an attorney, a real estate developer, the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, and was the former Ambassador to the Vatican.

The Secretary now leads the second largest department in the federal government, with 235,000 employees, and a budget that exceeds \$70 billion.

Comrades, I present to you a fellow combat veteran and a Life Member of the VFW, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jim Nicholson.

REMARKS BY VA SECRETARY JAMES NICHOLSON

VA SECRETARY NICHOLSON: Thank you, Jim. Good morning, everyone. It is a beautiful day here in Nevada after a wonderful evening last night. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Mueller, thank you for your warm reception, your comradeship during the past year, and most importantly I thank you for a job well done representing this great organization.

My congratulations to the new incoming Commander-in-Chief Gary Kurpius, and my thanks to your outgoing National Auxiliary President Sandy Germany with whom I got to sit last night. There is a woman with a big heart. My congratulations to Linda Meader, the incoming Auxiliary President. My greetings to all other members of the VFW and the Auxiliary, fellow veterans, distinguished guests and ladies and gentlemen.

I am very proud to be here today to address you, one of the longest-standing veterans service organizations in the world. For more than a century, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has exemplified the quiet virtues and the dynamic strengths that represent the very best of what it means to be an American, to be a patriot, and with leadership and compassion. Your commitment to combat veterans, the men and women who have truly made the difference to young people, to communities across our nation, has been exemplary.

We, at the VFW, consider ourselves to be the recipient of your support in our medical centers and across all of our programs. By your collective dedication to America's veterans and their families, it is abundantly clear that individually each of you is bound by word and by deed to one of mankind's highest calling, which is service to our fellow man.

By investing in America's future and by bringing neighborhood pro-

grams to life with your donations of time and talent, and by assisting VA hospital staff in providing recreational, physical, psychological, other therapies, the VFW perpetuates a noble concept that lies at the bedrock of the American experience.

Your work on legislative proposals for the Congress and your community work echo a civic tradition that goes to the heart of the American experience. Indeed, one of our founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, believed that, "The greatest honor of a man is in doing good for his fellow man." Thanks to you, the words of these national icons resonate with as much power, with as much passion and with as much purpose today as they did when they were spoken more than two centuries ago.

Your many contributions give credence to the belief that the measure of the nation is gauged by the way its people honor its defenders. Thanks to you America will never go wanting in that department either. My attendance here this morning reaffirms the fact that the VFW and the VA are bonded by a unity of mission, a commitment to service and a dedication to veterans and their families.

It is in that spirit of partnership and mutual interest that I want to briefly report to you today on the state of your VA. The overall health of the VA is terrific. It is strong, robust. It is performing its core missions in a wonderful way, and we are looking ahead, and the future is bright.

We are moving forward, fulfilling President Bush's promise to honor the nation's commitment to veterans. Our budget is a real measure of that. It is a springboard, if you will, to keeping the VA's promise. As Vice-President Cheney told you yesterday, the 2007 budget for the VA is truly historic: \$80.6 billion, the largest increase in discretionary funding ever requested. Health-care funding now with that budget will be up 70 percent under President Bush.

The first priority remains our service-connected disabled veterans, and veterans with no other health-care options, and those who need specialized care. Another major priority is the welfare of the service members coming back from the combat zone, and the importance of not just the substance of the medicine we provide, but the form. We want there to be a hassle-free transition for our OIF/OEF returnees.

Now, let me tell you some more VA good news. It ranges from electronic health records to patient's safety, to tele-medicine. The VA is the acknowledged industry leader in health care in America today. It sets the benchmark for excellence. Since you are sitting down, I will risk telling you that even The New York Times recently had an article extolling VA health care.

Maybe more importantly, the Journal of American Medical Association said that VA health is the model that ought to be followed in America and indeed the world. U.S. News & World Report, NBC Nightly News, ABC News, and very recently Business Week about five weeks ago on their cover said "Best U.S. Hospital System in America, the VA." There was a six-page article about why.

I don't know if any of you noticed, because the media did not cover it heavily, but just a few weeks ago there was a beautiful dinner in Washington at the Washington Hilton Hotel. It was hosted for us at the VA, and it was hosted by Harvard University.

The reason that it was doing that is it has awarded us, the VA, their

annual award for innovations and government solutions for electronic medical records. Over a thousand entities contested for that award, and they gave it to us at the VA.

I also want to mention the heroics of our great VA staff during Hurricane Katrina, which regrettably we are celebrating today the first anniversary. I don't know if celebration is the right word. We are remembering. You know, our Gulf Port hospital was obliterated down there. We had to evacuate the New Orleans hospital. We moved hundreds and hundreds of patients out of those hospitals under very difficult conditions.

We moved them to outlying hospitals up in Texas and Georgia, some in Alabama, and we did not lose one patient nor did we lose one medical record. We had over 40,000 veterans involved in that operation. Contrast that with how things went in the civilian sector where they lost over one million medical records. So, I am very proud of the people and their performance down there. (Applause) Thank you.

Now, you know, I grew up in a little town in Iowa and my brother, Jack, who is here, can tell you – he is going to speak to you later – we had a saying back there in Struble, Iowa. We had a lot of sayings, some of them I can't repeat here today, but one of the sayings was, "You know, it ain't bragging if it is true."

So, I am telling you this as the proud Secretary of this great organization, and I can do that because it is true and, too, I didn't make it that way in 19 months. I am standing on the shoulders of my predecessors and the people that did. But we are truly providing twenty-first century health care to our twenty-first century veterans, and that's just exactly what we should be doing.

Another thing that we are leading the pack on is in medical research. Last week I was in Albuquerque visiting a unique facility that we have there, which is called a Pharmaceutical Testing Center. We have many medical pharmaceutical experiments going on. Let me tell you about one, because I don't know if there is anybody in here that has ever suffered from shingles, but I have had friends and business associates who have. They have told me it is the most painful thing they have ever experienced.

We are in advanced clinical testing, we, the VA, on an antidote for shingles. It is a vaccination. We have run the clinical tests on 40,000 veterans and it looks very positive. That facility in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has coordinated the application of the test medicine and, of course, the placebos. I can go on and on about our medical research days, and what it has done. You know a lot of that.

I know we developed a pacemaker. You know that the first liver transplant was done in a VA hospital. But we are on the cutting edge in medical technology and research today, and that is something else that you-all can be very proud of in your VA.

Our partnership with DOD remains critically important, more so than ever, as we deal with the transition of these young people coming back from the war. Our people at the VA are professionals and they are totally committed to restoring these young men and women returning from the combat zones to the highest level of care possible for them in their lives ahead.

President Bush is very supportive in our medical technology goals and he has just issued an executive order, and it is in keeping with his commit-

ment to the health of our defenders. He signed this order on August 22nd to promote quality and efficient health care in all federal agencies and departments and all those who administer and sponsor health care for our citizens.

When fully implemented, it will really assist the VA, because it allows us to collect clinical information with known VA health providers. Doctors in private practice will be able to provide a higher quality of care through the use of electronic medical records, just as we are doing, and for retirees the VA will be able to exchange data with private doctors who are treating them under Tri-Care.

So, we enthusiastically support the President and will implement the executive order which will benefit veterans wherever they choose to receive their health care.

Let me talk to you a bit about the VA being the veterans benefits administration. We are focusing on timely and accurate delivery of benefits. The volume of claims has grown substantially over the past few years. We have a plan to bring down the waiting times, nevertheless. Last year, more than 3.4 million people received disability compensation for \$32 billion.

We continue to provide G.I Bill benefits to over 500,000 veterans a year. Just two or three months ago, we celebrated the eighteen-millionth G.I. loan, 100 percent, no down payment loan for a veteran. As a young returnee from Iraq to Texas, with two children, our rehabilitation program continues to get better and stronger.

Our National Cemetery Administration continues to do a outstanding job as recorded by our consumer surveys. Today in our country, over 1,800 of our fellow veterans will pass away. Most of them will be World War II and Korean veterans. So, we at the VA are expanding our ability to accommodate the burials of these brothers of ours.

We will play Taps this year at our cemeteries for about 107,000 veterans. We are now in the largest expansion in the history of the Veterans Cemetery Administration since the Civil War. So, your VA is there. We are there for veterans who need, and we are at war. Two weeks ago, I had the privilege of being in Iraq visiting with commands and visiting with General Casey.

President Talabai hosted us to lunch. We met with doctors in field hospitals and general hospitals in Baghdad, Kuwait City, and Beloit, and at every point in that continuum of care we were able to witness the extraordinary care and compassion being given to our veterans who fall in that conflict.

The thing is if you go away from there, and Secretary Rumsfeld alluded to this last night, it is extraordinary spirit and sense of purpose and morale of the American forces in that theater. It just lifts you. We all know we used to have that old expression that you can't fool the troops. Well, you still can't fool the troops.

It is the troops who are implementing our policy in that part of the world, and it is the troops who know what they are doing is very important and that they are making progress at what they are doing. So, that should be a real measure of the importance of what we are doing out there.

Let there be no question about it. We are at war. We are at war which, in my opinion, is with an enemy who is even more onerous than that of the Nazis or the Communists, or any other of our opponents in our history,

because they have avowed openly and do it daily to bring us down, to deny is our freedom, to change our way of life.

You know, it is not new either, and it pays sometimes to do some reading, which I sometimes do on airplanes. I will share with you one anecdote that I am reading called "America, the Last Best Hope." It talks about things right after the Revolution and we began as a country.

You know, President Washington and President Adams made a conscious decision when the Barbary pirates were kidnapping our ships as we began to trade with Europe and North Africa. Their logic was this: "This is cheaper than fielding a navy. We just ransom our people and our ships when they kidnap them. We will pay them off."

But President Jefferson said, "We are not going to do that. We cannot be an independent free self-governing nation if we continue to allow ourselves to be the victim of that practice." But before Jefferson became President, he was our Ambassador to France and this was going on. He confronted the Arab diplomat by saying he wanted to know by what right your country attacks Americans in the Mediterranean.

This is what the Arab diplomat said to him in the 1780s. The Ambassador answered, "It was founded on the laws of the prophet, and it was written in their Koran, that all nations who should not have answered their authority were sinners, that it was their right and duty to make war upon them wherever they could be found and to make slaves of all that they could take as prisoners."

I think that is a snapshot of the mindset of the radical fundamentalists that we are facing today and our country is at war and our way of life is at risk, and we need to stay the course and we need to support those men and women who are over there in the front lines doing it for us. We need to do that, because our freedom and its best hope rests on their shoulders. They are absolutely magnificent.

One other example of the state of their morale was that they told us about one brigade that begun to rotate home, and then things flared up in Baghdad. They had to extend them for four months. Some had already been deployed back to Alaska. Some of those people that just got back asked if they could return to their unit in Baghdad. We are so lucky to be served by men and women of that caliber.

You know, during my service in Vietnam, I thought that our medical evacuation system was magical actually in those pilots, how quickly they could come and take people out. But today, 40 years later, the speed about which our troops are taken and moved through this continuum of care from the war to Walter Reed is nothing less than incredible.

It is not unusual now for soldiers to go from a combat medic to an aide station, to combat support hospital, to Walter Reed in 24 to 36 hours, and to be in one of our rehab centers in a matter of weeks.

Speaking of rehab centers, I just want to tell you briefly, we have set up four major polytrauma centers, stationed them around the United States, and we are opening 17 other regional polytrauma centers where we are aggregating specialists to take care of these young men in wars who would not be alive but are because of body armor and great medical care, but need a tremendous amount of focused expertise. We are doing that for them.

Our goal is to give freedom back to those who fought for our freedom,

freedom to walk again, to talk, to see, and to live in the country of their choice. The bottom line that I came away from my travel is that these young men and women are the most outstanding people. They are the cream of the crop of this wonderful country and we at the VA and you are partners in this, are so privileged to be able to serve people like this.

Let me close now. I have just told you the fact that we are very well. We are doing other core jobs wonderfully, but we like any big organization have our challenges, and I want to acknowledge one of those to you and tell you what we are doing.

As you know, we experienced a tragic incident, a tragedy, if you will, where an employee took a computer home, his home was burglarized, it was stolen. It had the data of millions and millions of veterans on it, yourselves, and I was on it, too. I was as mad as you were.

Fortunately, through the work of good law enforcement agencies, and I sometimes add to the intervention of St. Anthony, we got it back. The FBI tells us it was not compromised. It does reveal the fact that we have a real weakness in the manner in which we were treating data.

I will say that management, and this is true at the VA, and I dare say probably throughout the government and the private sector, management has not kept up with technology. When we can digitize something and put it on a device that is smaller than my wallet, put the whole population of the United States of America on there, and then give people access to that, we need to know what kind of people they are.

So, we are doing a total overhaul of information technology and data protection at the VA. This is a major cultural change that is being worked on our people. We are doing background investigations on those who have access. We are encrypting things so when those shortcomings do occur and these human failings do occur, it will not be of a tragic result because it is encrypted.

The bottom line in all this is character and its responsibility. It is people taking seriously that responsibility, and that true respect they have for your private information. We are hard at it, believe me, and we are going to transform this large organization in this respect, and we can do it.

Our goal is to make it the gold standard, not just for the government but for the private sector as well. This has been done at the VA. We are the gold standard for electronic medical records, and we can do it again in data security. So, I want you to know that this is underway and you would imagine there was a great deal of turmoil, thousands of people being transferred into a consolidation of our information technology. But it is underway and the attitude overall is very good in our organization.

So, be assured that the VA's partnership with the VFW and its Auxiliary is very important to us. Your presence in the VA family gives a unique and critical perspective to the work that we do, and we welcome your input, we need your input, and we need your help.

You bring a special compassion, borne of service to our country and to others, indeed, in your devotion and you inspire us all. I want to thank you for all that you do for our veterans and that you do for us at the VA. May God bless the Veterans of Foreign Wars and may he bless our men and women in uniform, and please, God, bless our country. Thank you very much for having me today. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Mr. Secretary, I want to thank

you for the many courtesies extended to the VFW and myself personally. I thank you for your leadership and I want to thank you for being here today to visit with us.

VA SECRETARY NICHOLSON: God bless you and thank you.
(Applause)

PRESENTATION OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDALS AND CITATIONS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Our organization depends on certain types of individuals: people who know what needs to be done and then figure out the best way to accomplish it.

Perhaps no one else in our organization reflects that type of "can-do" spirit than the group of people we are about to honor.

Collectively, they have served for nearly 40 years working as State Adjutants and Quartermasters in their respective Departments.

Each has left an indelible mark on their individual Department and to the organization as a whole. All of us owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to these outstanding gentlemen.

Please join me in honoring Darrell Bencken from the Department of Kansas, Buck Caruso from the Department of Kentucky, Mike Furgal from the Department of Wisconsin, and John Gwizdak from the Department of Georgia.

We will do these individually. At this time I will call upon Darrell Bencken for a presentation.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The citation reads as follows:

"Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to Darrell F. Bencken.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of nearly two decades of unselfish service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars as a skilled administrator and remarkable leader who through his selfless dedication fulfilled the duties and responsibilities as Adjutant and Quartermaster for the Department of Kansas, testifying to his extraordinary commitment to the programs and missions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars this 29th day of August, 2006."

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - COMRADE DARRELL BENCKEN

COMRADE DARRELL BENCKEN (Department of Kansas): Thank you "Gunner". Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and my Comrades to the VFW: I am the happiest guy in this building. I served for 19 years as the Adjutant Quartermaster of Kansas. I had the opportunity to meet all of you people and create the many friendships I have done. I am certainly not going to give up on that. I am looking forward to seeing you every year.

I apologize, I don't have a suit on, but us retired folks wear clothes like this now. To my Department of Kansas, thanks a million, guys. I appreciate it. I hope that I served with the distinction that "Gunner" just read, and the Department will go right on with the new Quartermaster, and I am look-

ing forward to helping him. Thanks a million to all of you. It has been a great run. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Next I will call upon Cecil "Buck" Caruso. I served with Buck as Department Commander in '92-'93.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The citation reads as follows:

"Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to Cecil 'Buck' Caruso.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of many years of unselfish service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as a skilled administrator and remarkable leader who through his selfless dedication fulfilled the duties and responsibilities as Adjutant and Quartermaster for the Department of Kentucky, testifying to his extraordinary commitment to the programs and missions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 29th day of August, 2006."

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - COMRADE CECIL "BUCK" CARUSO

COMRADE CECIL CARUSO (Department of Kentucky): Good morning. If I had known my comrade over here wasn't going to wear a suit, I wouldn't have either. Commander-in-Chief, Officers, National Officers, Delegates assembled here at the 107th National Convention to conduct the business of this great organization, and especially to my Department Commander Brian Duffy and the delegates from Kentucky, I would like to thank you and our entire membership for allowing me to serve you in our great Department.

I accept this honor on your behalf and thank each and every one of you for your service to our country and our great organization. God bless you, God bless our active duty service members wherever they may be serving. God bless this great organization, and especially God bless the United States of America and may she continue to be all she can be. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: The next individual I would like to call up is Michael Furgal. Mike, will you please come forward.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The citation reads as follows:

"Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to Michael L. Furgal.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of unselfish service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as a skilled administrator and remarkable leader who through his selfless dedication fulfilled the duties and responsibilities as Adjutant and Quartermaster for the Department of Wisconsin, testifying to his extraordinary commitment to the programs and missions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 29th day of August, 2006."

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - COMRADE MICHAEL L. FURGAL

COMRADE MICHAEL FURGAL (Department of Wisconsin): Gosh, I am surprised. This is a total surprise to me. I want to thank the Department of Wisconsin for putting up with me for the past number of years. It has been a pleasure serving you. I will continue to serve you. Thank you one and all. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: The next individual I would like to call up has led this organization for many years and also came back to help the Department, John F. Gwizdak.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The citation reads as follows:

"Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to John F. Gwizdak.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of unselfish service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as a skilled administrator and remarkable leader who through his selfless dedication fulfilled the duties and responsibilities as Adjutant and Quartermaster for the Department of Georgia, testifying to his extraordinary commitment to the programs and missions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereupon, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 29th day of August, 2006."

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK (Department of Georgia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Elected Officers and Appointed Officers of the National Organization, and my Comrades:

May I take this personal privilege to introduce my wife, Christine, to those who have not met her. To be awarded a citation for something that you enjoy doing is even a greater credit, I guess, than just doing it. I have had the honor to meet so many of you. You have made a difference in my life. Each time I have met one of you, I have had something more than I had prior to that.

So, I am not going to retire from the VFW, although some people probably wish I would, but I am not going to. As far as wearing a suit, we only have a couple in Georgia, and it was my week to wear this one. So that's what it is.

The opportunity to serve an organization such as ours that is special, unique and different is an honor and a privilege. You have continued to give me an honor and a privilege by having the comradeship that you and I have shared. Let us continue to remember in our minds that our organization is unique and it is different. We will continue to do that.

There has been question about some cancer that I had. Yes, Christine kept pushing the issue. I went and was tested and, yes, I had cancer last year, prostate cancer. At the present time, my rates are 0.1, so the radiation

and all that stuff has worked. So thank you for all your prayers and stuff like that.

I know that God loves you or you wouldn't be here. America needs to love you for your sacrifice and to thank you constantly for what you have done to make America what she is. From an old infantry captain may I say to each of the warriors in the audience today, thank you for being who you are, and I love you all. Thanks. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF JACK NICHOLSON, DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is now my privilege to introduce the Director of the American Battle Monuments Commission, Retired Army Brigadier General Jack Nicholson.

The General is a graduate of West Point, who served 30 years in uniform, including two and a half years in Vietnam as an Airborne Ranger.

He now directs operations at 24 U.S. military cemeteries overseas that serve as the final resting place for almost 125,000 American service members.

He is also responsible for the upkeep of 25 monuments, memorials and markers, and for tablets of the missing that memorialize more than 94,000 American servicemen who have been missing and unaccounted for since World War I.

Prior to his January, 2005, appointment to the Commission by President Bush, General Nicholson was the Under Secretary of Memorial Affairs and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Comrades, I present to you a fellow combat veteran, someone who has devoted his entire adult life in service to this country, Brigadier General Jack Nicholson. Please give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

REMARKS – BRIGADIER GENERAL JACK NICHOLSON

BRIGADIER GENERAL NICHOLSON: Thanks, Jim, for this introduction. To all of you distinguished members of the VFW and fellow veterans and other distinguished people here, to me it is a real honor to have been asked to be here. I will always remember that and always be grateful.

There are three things I want to accomplish. Number one, I want to impart to you a better understanding of the American Battle Monuments Commission, what it is and what it does. Secondly, I want you to become disciples on behalf of our country to get many, many more people to visit our overseas American cemeteries and monuments.

During my presentation and the DVD that you will see, it will come across to you why this is valuable to our nation. The third thing I want to do is maybe not hit it directly, but I want to share with you some recent experiences I have had with soldiers that have recently returned from the war zones, the war that we are in, as everybody says.

Let me start off by saying that in a way both the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Battle Monuments Commission have a direct connection with respect to origins to John J. Pershing. In 1899, Pershing was fighting the Philippines' resurgence against the world and it was out of that war that the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization evolved, an organization

to care for veterans and the families of veterans.

A few years later, John J. Pershing was a General, and a very successful one in World War I. But at that time they called it the great war. It was the war to end all wars. Little did they know. But after that war was over in 1923, General Pershing was named the Chairman of the American Battle Monuments Commission by the President of the United States.

General Pershing kept that job for 25 years until he was succeeded by Five Star General George C. Marshall in 1948. But during his years as Chairman, General Pershing took a personal interest in the design and construction of the overseas American cemeteries, which at that time were on the battlefields of World War I.

The VFW motto is this: "Honor the Dead by Helping the Living." The motto of the American Battle Monuments Commission is this: "Time Will Not Dim the Glory of Their Deeds."

Now, your VFW mission is to safeguard the rights of the veteran and/or her family. The ABMC mission is to ensure that the deeds of the veterans are never forgotten. So, I would say, and you might agree, we have complementary models. I am pretty aware of the work of the VFW.

But let me ask you a question. How many of you know what the American Battle Monuments Commission does to honor veterans? Well, let me answer that question. ABMC, as Jim says, cares for 24 overseas American military cemeteries and 25 monuments. Most of our sites are in Europe, where the loss of service members in World War I and II are commemorated.

Since January, 2005, I have had the privilege of serving as the Secretary and as the Chief Executive Officer of the American Battle Monuments Commission. Most people know ABMC as the agency that earlier this decade built the World War II Memorial on the mall at Washington, D.C.

The man who coordinated that great accomplishment was here last night, and he may be here today. He is Retired Major General John Herling. If you meet John, please thank him for the magnificent job he and ABMC did on that World War II Memorial.

But building memorials is not ABMC's core mission. Our core mission is maintaining the 24 overseas cemeteries, maintaining them, and the 25 monuments. Unfortunately, not many Americans know about these cemeteries and monuments. Here is the crux of my message to you today.

We want to change that. We want all Americans to know that ABMC's mission is to honor the service, achievements and sacrifice of the United States armed forces where they have served since April 6, 1917, the date that the United States entered World War I.

Now, our ABMC cemeteries are different from the national cemeteries maintained by the VA or by the Army. Our cemeteries are commemorative. That is, they were created to bury war dead near the places where those soldiers fell. These cemeteries are uniquely splendid. They are the most beautiful in the world.

You don't need to take my word for that. The short video I would like to share with you now will show what I have been talking about and why I am so proud to serve our country with the American Battle Monuments Commission. Let's show that five-minute video now, please.

(Whereupon, the video was presented at this time.)

Thanks to you fellows in the booth for showing that video. That was

really timely and well-done. You folks can see that ABMC's standards are very high. We believe our cemetery standards are universal symbols of our nation's willingness to fight the sacrifice for the cause of freedom. We believe our cemeteries reflect now our country, the United States, who honors its veterans who gave their last full measure of devotion.

I am reminded of the words that Colin Powell frequently uses during his speeches and presentations. He said, "The United States of America has sent men and women in our armed forces to other parts of the world throughout the past century to put down oppression. We defeated imperialistic totalitarianism, Nazism and Fascism. We outlasted Communism. We saved Europe in World War I and II and the Cold War. When all those conflicts were over, what did America do? Did America ask for reparations? No. Did we ask for colonies? No. Did we ask for slaves or gold? No. All we ever asked for were those little plots of ground to bury our dead."

Americans have fought and died for the principle of freedom and democracy in every corner of the world. That same spirit of freedom is inspiring a new generation to place themselves in harm's way, to deny a new enemy's attempt to abridge our freedom and to take over the world.

This fate we are in now will get a lot more costly, but in the end we will prevail. Every one of America's ten or so previous wars, every one of them was challenging, some more than others. But in each war, the United States rose to the occasion and won in most cases, and presented defeat in all cases.

Speaking of today's generation of American warriors, let me briefly relate some memorable moments I have had this spring and summer. On 23 May, this year, I attended Lieutenant Colonel Joe Fentis' funeral at Arlington Cemetery. Joe was a tank commander serving in Afghanistan.

I attended that funeral because my son was Joe's commanding officer in Afghanistan, and my son called me and asked me to attend that funeral since he could not come back and attend it himself. I went to the church and I felt like I was in great company with literally hundreds of uniformed soldiers with combat patches, ranging from Privates to Four Star Generals.

I was introduced to the widow holding their five-week-old baby girl, their only child, after 19 years of marriage. The widow said to me, "I am holding a piece of Joe in my hand and I will always have it. Joe didn't see the baby, but he heard the baby the minute she was born because the guys made sure."

I had to look over her shoulder and I recognized the man standing behind her. It was Mike Gillsman with whom I had served in Vietnam 42 years ago. I said, "Mike, what are you doing here?" He pointed to the widow holding the baby and said, "She is my daughter." That is a small world.

Then the widow said, "General Nicholson, I want to introduce you to Joe's mom." So she took me over and introduced me to this little black-haired, blue-eyed lady from Long Island who said, "Did you know Joe?" I said, "No, ma'am, I didn't know him, but my son told me about him."

She said, "We knew your son, we liked him." She said, "I wish you would have known Joe. You would have liked him." She said, "Joe called me a few times from Afghanistan and he said, 'Mom, everything I have learned in my 41 years of life I am using to command these wonderful

American troops here. I have never been happier in my life.”

This little lady looked at me and she said, “He died at the top of his game. How many of us could say that?” she said. She and the widow reminded me of the women of Sparta that said goodbye to 300 who marched to the gates of Thermopylae to hold off the Persian Army while Sparta could mobilize and prevent the Persian Army taking over their state hundreds and hundreds of years ago.

The selection of 300 was based on their strength, experience, fighting skills, but the determining criteria was on the strength of their women, because Sparta couldn’t afford to have less than strong women because they knew none of these men were coming back. I guess that is why that brigade that Joe fought in and died in had the motto “With Your Shield,” which is what those wives and mothers told to the men who marched to the gates and successfully held off the Persian Army.

Folks, there is a lot of deep, strong feelings in our armed forces today, know it. On August 11th, I visited Walter Reed Army Medical Center with my son, Mike, who was home on leave from Afghanistan. We spoke to a couple of his NCOs who had been wounded less than a week before that and were being treated at Walter Reed Hospital.

These soldiers usually have a couple of questions, and then a few statements to make. These wounded soldiers, and I have visited many since these two, these soldiers, the first question is, “How are my buddies?” They want to know how the other guys in their squad or their striker vehicle, their Hummer, how they are doing.

The second question from these wounded soldiers, “When can I get back to my unit?” That is what is foremost in their mind. Then sometimes when they find out I am a Retired Brigadier General, they say, “General, you will help me stay on active duty, won’t you?” These are kids with missing limbs, missing eyes. That’s the kind of spirit that the young Americans have. I feel fortunate every time I get to shake their hand when I go to Walter Reed and talk to them.

On Memorial Day just recently, our President wrote the following: “Throughout our history, the men and women who have worn the uniform of the United States have placed the security of our nation before their own safety. From Valley Forge across Europe and Asia, and in Afghanistan and in Iraq, courageous Americans have given their lives so that others can live in freedom. They have liberated the oppressed, spread the freedom and peace and set a standard of courage and compassion for our nation; all who enjoy the blessings of liberty and life are in their debt.”

The reason for joining you at this wonderful convention is not to raise the level of your patriotism, that is not an issue, nor will it ever be with the VFW. I am really here to extend an invitation to you and all those you know to visit our American cemeteries overseas in ten countries and four continents.

Most of you are familiar with our cemetery overlooking Normandy Beach, but how many are familiar even in passing with some of the other cemeteries shown in this video? How many people in this room have visited Paris without going to visit the American cemetery at Suresnes, which

is in view of the Eiffel Tower, or equally impressive cemeteries in Florence, Italy, or Cambridge, England, or Tunisia in Africa, or Manila in the Philippines? I can't talk about every one that we have, but they are explained in detail on our Web site at www.abmc.gov.

I invite each one of you to take a few minutes to visit our ABMC booth in your exhibit area here at the convention. Talk to our representatives, Charles Croane, a retired combat soldier, and cemetery superintendent from Europe, Tom Cavaness, and pick up an information card. All of our cemeteries are national treasures.

They inspire patriotism in Americans and evoke gratitude from other Americans, and they teach the lessons of history to everybody that sees them. They are places of beauty and places where we can show our children and our grandchildren why our nation and our ideals are worth the sacrifices of all who rise to the cause.

Let me read briefly what a recent American visitor to the cemetery in Belgium said. "At a time when our nation is experiencing so much controversy over its policies, both domestic and foreign, our visit to our cemeteries helps to remind us that death has no politics, and our country's military cemeteries are unique places of respect, remembrance and hope."

In closing, I thank you very much for inviting me here today. It is a pleasure and always will be an honor. Please visit our cemeteries. You will be glad you did. God bless you and the VFW, our veterans and their families, and our great nation. Thank you very much. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE CHALLENGE OF THE FUTURE AWARDS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: For 2005-2006 membership year, I continued the Challenge of the Future Awards to recognize those individuals who recruited the most new or reinstated members in four different categories.

Category 1 is for recruiting eligible ages 18-34 years old, and the winner is Robert J. "Joe" Mulligan, Post 27, Department of Europe.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: I will now read the citation and they all will read the same.

The citation reads, "Challenge of the Future Award.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of your outstanding service in the VFW Membership Program.

"Your exceptional initiative and untiring effort during the 2005-2006 membership year contributed immeasurably toward the national membership goal of recruiting 180,000 new or reinstated members.

"For the 'Proud to Serve America's Veterans' team you are commended for your professional achievements and recognized for your dedication to the goals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 29th day of August, 2006."

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – COMRADE ROBERT MULLIGAN

COMRADE ROBERT MULLIGAN (Post 27 – Department of Europe): I would like to thank my comrades from the Department of Europe for your great support over the years. I have had a lifetime of service working for the government in Europe that will end sometime next year. Unfortunately, things do end.

I will return back to the United States where I believe I am a true citizen. For you folks in the State of Ohio, I look forward serving you next year down there in the great hills of the Appalachia.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Category 2 is for recruiting eligibles 35-50 years old, and the winner is John M. Warner, Post No. 4851, Department of California.

Category 3 is for recruiting eligibles 51-65 years old and the winner is Stephen Schlueter, Post 10141, Department of Florida.

RESPONSE – COMRADE STEPHEN SCHLUETER

COMRADE STEPHEN SCHLUETER (Post 10141 – Florida): Thank you very much. As Past Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak said a few minutes ago, it is really something to get an award for something you like doing so much. I want to take one second to say hello to my family from Wisconsin and my new family from Florida. Thank you for all of your support, too. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Category 4 is for active duty, National Guard and Reserve members, and the winner is Harry C. Munn, Post No. 6008, Department of Texas. He is not here. I am sorry.

PRESENTATION OF THE 2006 AMERICANISM AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is now my honor to introduce Dr. Richard Carmona, the former Surgeon General of the United States, and the recipient of this year's VFW Americanism Award.

Dr. Carmona was born and raised in New York City. He dropped out of high school and enlisted in the Army in 1967. He went into Special Forces and became a decorated Vietnam veteran.

He obtained his GED Certificate, and once he left active duty, he returned to New York where he received an Associate's Degree from Bronx Community College before heading to San Francisco where he received a Bachelor's Degree and Medical Degree at the University of California.

Dr. Carmona has worked in numerous positions in the medical field, as a paramedic, as a registered nurse and as a physician.

Prior to being named by President Bush as our country's seventeenth Surgeon General in 2002, he was the Chairman of the Southern Regional Emergency Medical System for the State of Arizona. He was also a Professor at the University of Arizona, and a Surgeon and Deputy Sheriff for the Pima County Sheriff's Department.

When he first got the call from the White House to discuss the nomination, he thought his friends in the Sheriff's Department were playing a joke on him.

Dr. Carmona, all of America is very glad that you returned that phone call, because you are a true example that anyone can succeed in America provided that they believe, to use your own words, as long as they believe

in tenacity, perseverance, and incrementalism.

Comrades, may I present to you a fellow Vietnam veteran and the recipient of this year's VFW Americanism Award, the former Surgeon General of the United States, Dr. Richard Carmona. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The citation reads as follows:

"Americanism Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Richard H. Carmona, M.D.

"In sincere appreciation for his life-long dedication to public service and the medical field, culminating with his distinguished service as U.S. Surgeon General. With a diverse background that includes combat duty in the Army's Special Forces, law enforcement and health care, Dr. Carmona's selfless contributions to national security, public health awareness and volunteerism have helped to keep America strong and are a true testament to his character and make him most worthy of recognition by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 29th day of August, 2006. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – DR. RICHARD CARMONA

COMRADE CARMONA: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I thank you for this extraordinary privilege of not only receiving this very prestigious award but also to be welcomed back among my peer group, veterans. As you heard, my background is a little unusual for a surgeon. Some of you probably are worried that you heard that your Surgeon General is a high-school dropout and a federal employee.

First, 37 years late, my high school gave me my diploma, and I am officially a high-school graduate. My life really exemplifies a lot about what you are all about, the VFW is all about, and the greatness of this country. I was first born in this country. My grandmother came here with 27 kids, couldn't speak English, only spoke Spanish, and settled in New York City in Harlem.

I have two brothers and a sister, and my story is a lot like many inner-city kids who didn't try. My two brothers and my sister and I never finished high school. My parents had trouble with substance abuse. We were homeless at six years old in the streets.

I became a surrogate parent for my brothers and sister, and kind of wandered through life without any direction until somebody I didn't even know reached out to me and encouraged me to go back to school. I told them I was too old. I was 17. So he said, "See a friend of mine."

In 1967, his friend was an Army recruiter. You know the story. I walked in and the man welcomed me in and said, "Sit down, son." He said, "We are going to make you all you can be." He gave me a few tests at that time and he said, "Carmona, you have got a lot of potential here. Sign this paper and we are going to take care of you."

It was the best signature I ever put on a piece of paper, because more than making me a good soldier, the Army taught me to be a good citizen. The skills that I have used my whole life to be successful are based on that

platform for success that the Army gave me, about duty, honor, country, dedication, about tenacity, about perseverance, about how it is to stay in the fight when it is important and not give up.

And as I get older, I realize the only difference between a person that succeeds and fails, the person that succeeds just gets up one more time. When I speak to kids today around the country about success and failure, and leadership, I am proud now to speak of my failures where in the beginning I wasn't. I wanted to hide them, because I was still embarrassed.

But I recognize even at this point I have failed more times than I have succeeded. But as I got older, I learned from every one of those failures and it made me a stronger and better person. Knowing when to stay in the fight, when it is important is probably what is most important.

So, as I went through life and I went in the Army and went to Special Forces and got a GED, and I was going to make the Army my career because it is the only stable life I had. My colleagues encouraged me to get out and I went to school, I stayed in the Reserves for a while, became a student in college, not because I was the smartest kid in the class, but because I was the most disciplined kid in the class. All skills I had learned as a young soldier, I used.

As I moved through life, it is those skills that made me very successful. As I went through life, not having a great deal of economic support, I worked. Every one of the jobs I ever had in my life contributed significantly during my tenure as Surgeon General of the United States.

I have been a police officer, a paramedic, a registered nurse, a teacher, and lots of my military skills I used in teaching. So, as I went forward and finally went to medical school, skipped a year of medical school and graduated number one in the class, what I recognized was that I was the most disciplined person in my class.

I was able to see where every tree in that forest was, whereas, the rest of the kids were searching. I had it on every one of the trees. I knew what I needed to be successful, because I looked at every challenge before me as a mission, skills I learned as a young NCO in Army Special Forces.

As I went through medical school and became a surgeon and a specialist in trauma burns and critical care, I never lost contact with my roots, the people I grew up with, my fellow veterans that I went through training and combat with that are still friends today four decades later, the paramedics, the police officers, the soldiers and others.

I realized I was part of a very significant tradition, that my father and my uncles had served in the Second World War. My brother and I served during Vietnam, and my son just came back from Iraq. So, we have got three generations of veterans within the family.

I recognized the importance of that title of veteran, how important it is in our society and what it says about each and every person that has the privilege to have that title. You-all stepped up to bear the burden of society at the time when society needed assistance from its citizens.

As I moved through life, I never, ever thought I was going to be Surgeon General. I am the first in my family to go to college. Before my mother died, when we were children, all she used to say in Spanish at night to us was, "I just want to live long enough to see one of my kids graduate." All she meant was high school, because nobody had gotten out of high school.

So, this has been an extraordinary journey for me and only one that could occur in America and only occur in America because of the sacrifices that each and every one of you have made and you forefathers have made, and your children are making today to keep our country safer and secure, and allow each and every young man and woman to appreciate all of their potential in anything that they choose to do.

There are few places in the world like America because of that. So, as you know, I can't believe I was Surgeon General. The President of the United States nominates, and you go for Senate confirmation. As you heard in the introduction, when I got the voice mail one night on the machine, a young man said, "Dr. Carmona, this is from the White House personnel. Will you give us a call? We would like to speak to you about a job."

As you heard, I felt certain this was one of my veteran friends or my officers that I worked with who were jerking my chain and they were going to get a good laugh about calling for the White House. I had no ties to any particular party. I was not politically active. I was a good citizen and voted like everybody else, but even if I was qualified, it was no reason for me to get the call. I didn't have the proper entrée credentials, if you will.

Nevertheless, I answered. The young man told me about the job. I said, "What job is it?" He said, "Surgeon General of the United States." I laughed and I thought surely this means there is another Richard Carmona in the country. I said there is no doubt, being a smart street kid, they will figure out they have the wrong man, and I still have a job, and let's just go for it. I did.

I was told it was about 600 candidates. I thought I didn't have a chance. I started taking telephonic interviews with leaders in Washington about the job. After the second one, I realized that any subsequent call I might get rejected. So, I put down a little rejection speech on a three-by-five card, which I still have, because I knew I would be rejected.

On that card, I called it my "rejection speech with dignity", because when they tell me, I want to out with pride. I added a statement to that, "Thank you for considering me. Please let the President know if he has open any uniformed positions, I would certainly be happy to serve my country," and here is my name, address, et cetera, et cetera.

I kept taking the card out and kept putting it back after the phone calls. They finally invited me to Washington, and I started being interviewed by people who were quite famous, people you read about in the papers every day. As I went through the first few of those interviews, I was awestruck by being in the Capitol, being in the White House in the buildings where the leaders of our nation are and meeting with people that I read about every day, who really control our destiny.

I started wondering if I snuck through this far, did I really want to work with this organization? Then after a very relatively short period for a nomination process, I got a call late one night from the White House, a very senior official who said, "Dr. Carmona, we would like to know what you are doing on March 26th." That is five years ago.

I thought, maybe another interview. I started to answer and he said, "We want to know what your family is doing, especially your children." I said, "Oh, my gosh, they want to interview my kids. I am screwed. I will never get the job." (Laughter)

So, he said, "Dr. Carmona, I am sorry. We just had a meeting with the

President and the President has made his decision and he would like to know if you would accept his nomination as the next United States Surgeon General and come to the White House on March 26th with you family."

I said, "You are 'shitting' me." (Laughter) He said, "No, sir, I am not." So, I told my wife and I said take the kids and get some clean underwear and teach them how to shake hands and curtsy. Let's not lose it now.

We went to the White House and one of the most extraordinary days of my life. The President greeted me like family, spent a lot of time with me telling me about my new responsibility, and as we were ready to walk out of his office into the Green Room to be introduced to a big crowd and all the reporters in the world, it seems, he said to me, "Where is your family, Rich?" I said, "I think they are out in the press room already waiting."

He has the Secret Service bring the family back in. My son, Jason, my son, Robert, and my daughters, Jan and Carolyn, and my son-in-law were all there. My son, Jason, as I was leaving to come to the White House said, "Dad, I am only a Spec 4 in the Army. I probably should not wear my uniform. It will be all those Admirals and Generals there, so maybe I should just wear a suit."

I said, "No, son, you should wear your uniform and be proud of that uniform. You are serving your country." So, as they all walked into the President's office, Jason with his uniform on with his Spec 4 rank on the side, U.S. Army, the first person the President went to was Jason and gave him the biggest hug and said, "Jason, thank you for serving your country like your dad." Jason looked and said, "Dad I think you are right."

We get to Julie, who was very dismayed that her dad was going to go to Washington and leave the West and who would play with her and take her to breakfast on Saturday morning? She was distraught about this. The President said to her, "Julie, thank you for allowing your father to come to work for us and serve his country again. You know, he will have a very important job as the seventeenth Surgeon General of the United States." Julie Ann said to the President, "How come you couldn't stop at sixteen?" (Laughter) And they went back out into the Green Room where all the press and the dignitaries were and Cabinet members.

The President then turned to me and said, "Rich, don't worry. I do this all the time. You will be a little nervous. We are going to stand at this door right here. You see that speaker up there? The way this works, every time we walk out for a press conference we have what is a two-minute drill. At the two-minute drill they will start playing Hail to the Chief." He looked at me and said, "That is for me and not for you."

He said, "You stand on my left. Secretary Thompson will be here and we will walk in together and you follow me up to the podium. I will say a few words and give you the podium." I said, "Yes, sir." As we start playing Hail to the Chief, and the Marine Band is getting ready to move and the Color Guard, it is in front of me maybe 30 or 45 seconds out from moving, and I looked out at the President's cuff is tucked under his heel. It is torn a little bit.

So I thought, "Well, here is my first critical management decision." I reached down real quickly to try and fix his cuff without upsetting the Secret Service, and I fixed the cuff. I stand back up at attention and Secretary Thompson looks over to me and says, "Carmona, you are going to do very well in this administration." (Laughter)

Then we walked out, and then your life changes. You go from being just an ordinary citizen working in your community doing the best you can to a public figure overnight. Everything you do is a matter of public knowledge and everything you don't do is a public record, because there is somebody that assumes what you are doing.

You recognize the huge burden that you just inherited as being a doctor of the greatest nation in the world. It is a daunting responsibility and one that you recognize because of the fish bowl you live in, that you actually are giving up all of your privacy for the privilege of serving your country.

It is not over then, because you go to Senate confirmation. It is a whole other half of the process. The President nominates and the Senate confirms. You need all the Senators on the Hill when you go for confirmation in public. They can ask you anything they want for as many hours as they want, and they can make you look pretty intelligent or make you look like a failure.

One Senator, a senior Senator on the committee confirming me, took a liking to me and said to me, "Richard," he called me, "son, I want to tell you a little about Washington." At the end of the discussion about Washington, he said to me, "Now, when you come to Washington, if you want a real friend, you bring a dog."

I said, "Well, Senator, I have heard that before and I am not absolutely sure, but I am sure you are trying to give me good advice and I will figure it out." A couple of years later when I was in the job as Surgeon General, I saw him again, and I said, "Senator, remember what you told me?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Senator, I think you were wrong." He said, "Why, Rich?" I said, "Senator, I think when you come to Washington you need to bring two dogs." He said, "Why is that?" I said, "Because during your tenure one of those dogs will turn on you." (Laughter)

So, as I went through the confirmation process it was a pretty extraordinary process, meeting the leadership of our nation. In an unprecedented fashion, I got a unanimous confirmation in a very divided beltway, which is extraordinary in this day and age. Then you recognize now you have to assume that responsibility as an Admiral as the Surgeon of the United States, and what are you going to do to make to different?

What are you going to do in this legacy that you have inherited to serve with dignity and move policies forward that will carry our nation? The Surgeon General is to protect and promote the health security of the United States. That is a piece of cake. It is not real easy.

After a couple of months of working, putting together a portfolio that would allow me to work as Surgeon General and keep me focused on issues that are germane to us all as veterans as well as the nation, I went home, and I was homesick, and I had not seen my wife and I was desperate for a break.

The first thing when I got in the door, I didn't have my uniform on, I was the civilian, she said, "Why don't you take the kids and their friends to lunch? Take my Suburban." There were a bunch of kids. We all piled in the Suburban and went to a fast food place in town.

I had a T-shirt, running shorts and running shoes on. As we walked in at lunchtime, it was packed. Everybody knew me from the community because I had worked there many years and knew they knew me as Sur-

geon General. I recognized you really can't go home as the same person, because it was if that whole fast food restaurant stopped.

Everybody looked at me, and I felt like a homeless neighborhood surgeon the way I was dressed. I was feeling very awkward. I sat in the corner. The kids were there and their friends, and they sat around me listening to the stories and wanting to hear about Washington.

My son sat across from me, and he has this big plate of French fries and pushes it in front of me. Instantly, I picked up a French fry and everyone in the restaurant is watching me. So I dropped the French fry. I tell my son, "Dad has got this new job. We have to do French fries covertly from now on." That is just one of a thousand anecdotes that you remember that changed your life forever.

Then you get to the business of being Surgeon General. What is it that you want to do? Well, one of the groups that I was very concerned with and one of the first meetings I had at the time was with Secretary Principi at the VA. I followed that through the years working with Secretary Dickson and his staff, the Undersecretary.

I said let me see what I can do as the Surgeon General to have an impact on large populations who have health disparities, who have problems that are not being dealt with. As I looked at my portfolio, prevention was number one, taking our nation from being one that relies on care and spending 16 percent of our gross national product on health care to a nation that embraces health, wellness and prevention so that the cost of care goes down, the quality of your life and longevity of your life goes up, getting our nation ready for the challenge from terrorists to bird flu.

Health disparities, which are typically spoken of as it relates to ethnic minorities in our country, Hispanics, African Americans, Native Americans, who have very poor health statistics, but I remember saying to the secretaries and to others, "You know what I know about another group that represents health disparities. My fellow veterans who have a burden of mental health problems, who had a burden of cardiovascular disease, who has more diabetes than the rest of the country, have higher heart attack rates than the rest of the country. Let's do something for the veterans on the disparities as well as prevention."

We embarked on, and I think you have heard about programs we have put together, some of the challenges we have put together to try and make our veteran population better so they live longer and have better quality of life, so the cost of health care is reduced and hence more care available to all veterans and citizens outside of the Veterans Administration.

So, as I moved through on these priorities, recognizing that I had a finite amount of time to make a difference, I recognized that one of the most important things that I did as Surgeon General was really not public health, but it was regarding the dignity and integrity of the office of the Surgeon General, which is it, if you are successful in everything you do.

The American public holds this position up as a very valid position. The rest of the world looks at this as almost a special position, almost as royalty in the United States. When I look at the history of over 200 years in this position, all it has done for this nation and the world, you recognize that that is your most important thing, protecting the dignity and integrity of that office. In doing so, you are able to be a more effective Surgeon General.

When I got to Washington, I thought I was going to change the world.

I thought I was going to stamp out disease and famine, and pestilence. I wondered what the other 16 surgeons did. Why is so much left to do? I recognize the beltway is a very difficult piece. So, in moving my agenda forward, I recognized that as I build a legacy every day it is not going to be about any magnanimous changes, it will be incrementalism and staying in the fight every single day, not giving up on the issues that are important.

That is veterans' health, health disparity, preparedness, making our nation strong and more secure. People try to knock you off balance because they see a different world. My vision was clear, and apolitical. It was to move the agenda ahead that makes our nation healthier and more secure.

I recognize now as I leave the position of Surgeon General that it wasn't going to be about any famous awards, it wasn't going to be about some legislation named after me, or any magnanimous changes, it was really going to be a retrospective analysis by lots of people, including you, how I served my country.

So, I adjusted the methods for what I thought my success to be first, that the President of the United States, who in an unprecedented fashion, took a chance on a high-school dropout, unknown to Washington, to serve in one of the most important positions in government, had his faith reaffirmed in me that he named me, and that I will serve with dignity and that the Senate felt in retrospect they made a good choice, that I served with dignity and integrity.

Most importantly, my peers, all of you, the veterans of the United States who served with me, before me and after me, but we are a family. We are a very excellent proud fraternity because of our surveys that all of you can look to me and say he did the right thing, he served with dignity and integrity.

He soldiered on, and that the world that I now serve sees that I understood that the position is a global position. It is not just the Surgeon General of the United States. What I say or do have rippling effects around the world, that now the world appreciates that I understand the globalness of the position and embraced it, and not only understood it.

As I leave and I look at my tenure as Surgeon General, and all the jobs I have had before, what I recognize is that I have lots of titles. I have been a soldier, I have been a police officer, I have been a paramedic, I have been a teacher, I have been a professor, but probably none of those titles is more important than being a veteran and one of you. Thank you so much for allowing me to be with you today.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Dr. Carmona, I want to thank you for being here. It would be my privilege to bestow upon you Life Membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMRADE CARMONA: It will be my privilege, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you very much for your service.

PRESENTATION OF AWARD BY POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: We will now have a presentation to Commander-in-Chief Mueller from Past Commander-in-Chief and current

Chairman of the Political Action Committee, Arthur Fellwock.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: I request that Sal Caprichio, who is the Director of the VFW Political Action Committee, assist me this morning. The Political Action Committee has taken some real hard stands this year. I think our Commander-in-Chief is one that provided a lot of this. We have taken the stand.

By golly, we sent out a questionnaire, we sent out a questionnaire to 492 Congressmen and Senators, and of that we got 240 of them back. We wanted to know their position on how do they stand on our priority goals. What do they think of mandatory funding for the VA? What do they think of the U.S. Flat? We had on that U.S. Flag some Congressmen and Senators who said on the questionnaire they would support the flag amendment, but when the time came to vote they did just the opposite.

I guess that is what is burning most of us. They will say one thing, they will do another thing. Well, the Political Action Committee is going to follow up to make sure if they are saying something they are going to carry it out as well. You know, we have had some of the politicians in regards to that questionnaire say, you know, it is our policy not to answer any questionnaires.

Well, I say it is the VFW Political Action's policy not to endorse any candidate unless they do fill out a questionnaire and we know how they stand. We, of the Political Action Committee, are getting tired of promises and nothing happens. We are going to monitor exactly if they say something to make sure they carry it out.

It is a great honor for me, along with Sal here, to make this presentation to our Commander-in-Chief. Our Commander-in-Chief has been behind the Political Action Committee this entire year. He has supported us and he has given us the ability to do things, and we went a little bit further and we are putting pressure where pressure will be needed. We are using the muscles to make some politicians come true to what they said.

Now, it is a great honor for me at this time to present to the Commander-in-Chief this eagle. That is the golden eagle to James R. Mueller, the 2005-2006 Commander-in-Chief. Congratulations, Jim. We are proud of you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Let me express my appreciation to you and Sal for all the work you have done this year. The questionnaire has gotten results. Thursday I got a call from my Congressman, because he didn't have his questionnaire in. They are worried about what we are doing. I thank you for the support and keep us in that track.

PRESENTATION OF "CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP" CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, for 39 years, the members of the Department of Arizona have worked together as a team to increase VFW membership throughout the state.

Each member of the Department of Arizona can take pride in their many years of dedication and hard work that went into reaching this significant milestone. Now in recognition of those efforts, I would like to call on Darrel Moore, the Immediate Past Department of Arizona, to accept this "Consecutive Year of Membership" growth citation. Congratulations to the

Department of Arizona. (Applause)

I had the rare privilege this past year in November to travel down into Arizona and rededicate Post No. 40 in Pat Tillman's name. From there I went to Maricopa where we instituted a new Post, and that Post is flourishing, and now have a Ladies Auxiliary. My congratulations.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The Certificate reads as follows:

"Certificate of Commendation awarded to the Department of Arizona.

"In recognition of an amazing record of 39 consecutive years of continuous membership gain by a Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 29th day of August, 2006."

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

COMRADE DARREL MOORE (Department of Arizona): Comrades, it gives me great pleasure to accept the award. When I was in Kansas City as a Junior Vice Commander for the Department of Arizona and met with all the other Junior Vice Commanders, I let them know that I had a problem.

That was if they didn't break this chain before I got to be State Commander, and I didn't live up to the 100 percent membership, I was transferring to one of their states because Arizona wasn't going to let me back in. Needless to say, I don't have to transfer out of Arizona. Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO LEO ANDREW

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I now want to award the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Edward "Leo" Andrew, the former Director of Administration for the VFW Washington Office.

Leo served in Vietnam from 1967 to '68 as an artillery liaison officer with the Second Brigade of the 101st Airborne.

He was stationed at the Pentagon when he caught the eye of our Washington Office, who hired him in 1984 after he retired from the Army with 22 years of service.

Leo retired from the VFW last November after more than 21 years of service. He and his wife, Nancy, reside in Alexandria, Virginia. Please welcome Leo Andrew. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The Citation reads as follows:

"Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to Edward L. 'Leo' Andrew.

"In sincere and grateful recognition of more than 20 years of exceptional and devoted service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, as a dedicated employee in the VFW Washington Office, fulfilling the positions of Director of Administration, Director of Administrative Services and Special Assistant for Public Affairs.

"His commitment to the objectives of the VFW, along with the professionalism and integrity with which he performed his duties, is in keeping with the finest traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 29th day of

August, 2006."

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – COMRADE LEO ANDREW

COMRADE LEO ANDREW: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief Mueller and Adjutant General "Gunner" Kent, for this award. It will certainly occupy a very special place in my Washington home.

I would like to take just a few moments to acknowledge and thank all the staff from the Kansas City and Washington Offices for the many years that we have worked together as a team. You are the best and I will miss all of you greatly.

As you know, I spent almost 22 years in the VFW. During that time I saw many of my fellow comrades march up here on the stage and receive their award, and then march off the stage. I used to wonder at that time when would it be time for me to retire?

Well, I thought about it and thought about it, and then the answer came. It was a quick one. The answer was when you start spending more time in the doctor's offices than you do spending time working in the office, then you know it is time to retire.

Comrades and Sisters, it has been my pleasure to have served you and the VFW for these many years. Thank you and may God bless America. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO LARRY GNIOTCZYNSKI

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, we take particular pride in the ability National Headquarters has to deliver assistance to VFW Posts and Departments wherever and whenever needed.

An integral part of the organization is its employees, those people who work at National Headquarters doing what they can to provide support and assistance to our Departments and Posts.

Through the years one person has played an important role to ensure delivery of these services. His many years of service as a VFW employee, initially as a Veterans Service Officer and then as Assistant Director of General Services, is testimony to his commitment and dedication to his community, his nation and to the organization.

Please join me in honoring Larry Gniotczynski, or better known as Larry. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The Citation reads as follows:

"Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to Larry Gniotczynski.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of 20 years of exceptional and devoted service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars as a dedicated employee, initially in the position as a Veterans Service Officer and then as Assistant Director of General Services. His enthusiasm and dedication, as well as his appreciation for the goals and aims of the organization, has been truly in keeping with the highest traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official

seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 29th day of August, 2006.”

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen “Gunner” Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE – COMRADE LARRY GNIOTCZYNSKI

COMRADE LARRY GNIOTCZYNSKI: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief James Mueller, Adjutant General Allen “Gunner” Kent, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars for this prestigious award. I would like to also thank a few individuals who made this award possible for me, namely the late Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr., Larry LeFebvre, John Senk, Phyllis Cale and my good friend Austin Smith from the Washington Office.

I would like to thank my former boss of 19 years, Dave Swindler, and the entire staff in General Services, especially Alisa Neilon and Julian Alvarez. Also, at this time I would like to thank the support staff of the VFW National Headquarters for their kindness and support, especially the Voice of Democracy staff for allowing me to be a chaperone for the last 19 years.

I would also like to thank my lovely wife, Tammy, and my four children, Jenny, Levi, Seth and Luke, for their love and support, and for allowing daddy to do what daddy loves to do, a veteran helping veterans.

But most importantly, I would like to thank you, the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, for your kindness and support the past 25 years. Again, thank you from the bottom of my heart and may God bless each and every one of you. Thank you. (Applause)

NATIONAL HOME REPRESENTATIVES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: One of the proud icons of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our Ladies Auxiliary is the VFW National Home for Children in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. The National Home is a profound example of veterans helping veterans. Today the home provides comfortable housing and a caring staff designed to give families a safe nurturing environment.

This morning, we are honored to welcome the Executive Director Patrice Green, Public Relations Director Barry Walter, and the 2006 Buddy Poppy child, Samantha Spitzley. Please give them a warm welcome, comrades. (Applause)

We also have Dana Hussey, who is President of the Board. Dana, please come forward.

REMARKS BY COMRADE DANA HUSSEY

COMRADE HUSSEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Good morning, National Officers and my fellow comrades:

I would like to acknowledge several of the Trustees here today. First, I am Dana Hussey representing District 1, and I live in the Department of New Hampshire. I think we have New Hampshire here.

District 2 Trustee and Vice-President of the Board is Mel Garrett from New York.

District 3 Trustee, Lawrence Stensland from Pennsylvania.

District 4 Trustee, Roger Taylor from Ohio.

District 5 Trustee, John Hamilton from Florida.

District 7 Trustee, Dave Schmid from Wisconsin.

District 9 Trustee, Larry Scudder from South Dakota.

District 10, Roy Ator from Texas.

District 11 Trustee, Lewie Cooper from Kansas.

And representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars on the Board of Trustees, Adjutant General "Gunner" Kent, Quartermaster General Larry Maher and, of course, the very important rep on the Board of Trustees, Commander-in-Chief Jim Mueller.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the staff, and the children and families at your National Home, thank you for inviting us to appear before your delegation at the 107th National Convention. The Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary have unwavering commitment to keep America strong by supporting our veterans and active duty military.

So in 1925 they established the VFW National Home for Children. Since that day, the Home has been supported and funded by generous and loyal VFW and Ladies Auxiliary members across the country. Because of this and because the Home has never seen or accepted or sought federal funding, the National Home programs can be flexible, flexible to meet the needs of our veterans as they change over time.

For over 80 years, the National Home has served the veterans' children and families, and during those 80 years our programs and services have continuously grown and developed to meet their needs. We also should be very proud of the Home's dedication of service in helping thousands of children of American veterans.

The founders of the Home thought it was important to be represented on the Board of Trustees, and they made it a mandate in the Articles of Incorporation. What a vital and important service you and your representatives perform in that role. Thank you for your participation and leadership, and for all you have done for veterans and for the VFW and the national children. Thank you.

I will now introduce the National Director of the National Home, Patrice Green.

REMARKS BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREEN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREEN: Thank you, and thank you, Commander-in-Chief Mueller for the invitation to be here today. Jim, as you have gone through the chairs, you have visited the National Home many, many times. During your term of office you have extended yourself to attend Board meetings, providing encouragement, leadership and counsel, and when you could not attend you have graciously assigned one of your officers.

Additionally, you made time in your very busy schedule to come to the National Home to attend very special events, such as the ground breaking for the first new house built at the National Home in over 40 years. Recently in May, you attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony, and we officially opened the Stephen P. Yokich Duplex at the National Home.

The Stephen Yokich Duplex is going to be sponsored by the Veterans

Affairs Department of the UAW. We thank you for your personal dedication to the National Home, Jim, and all during your years as a National Officer. We will miss you, but we will always have a place for you to stay whenever you are able to visit your National Home family.

The National Home has been very busy since we appeared before you last year. With the conclusion of the Stephen Yokich new cottage, we will be able to take care of more VFW families. With that brand new duplex, we are now able to serve two more families on your National Home campus.

This year we expanded our programs to serve veterans' families when the veteran is participating in vocational rehabilitation due to a service-related disability. We are proud to announce that our first veteran and family in this important new program joined our campus community in July, and this week he is starting his vocational rehabilitation program. This has all been made possible by your hard work and your generosity and your support.

We are also pleased to announce that in August another new family joined us as part of our military family program. This young mother and her two children joined our campus while her husband is serving in Iraq as a member of the Michigan National Guard, who is just recently deployed.

Again, through your hard work, you should be so proud that your National Home is able to serve and offer a safe home and support for families of our nation's veterans and military who may desperately need their help.

At the National Home, we are currently serving 121 residents in our on-campus residential programs. In addition, we have many, many more throughout the country by offering professional counseling and services. Members from all over call us. They are in need of assistance. Sometimes they don't need to come to the National Home. Sometimes they just need some counseling and some support and guidance.

For example, just recently our social workers were counseling two military families from Alabama who had suffered recent loss of loved ones in Iraq. They desperately needed someone to talk with, and because of our experience with veterans' issues and veterans' resources, and our ability to research and access these services for these families, and because of our willingness to listen, and because we care, we are helping more veterans' families than ever before.

Some of you may have heard of all the exciting roles of activities at the National Home. We received a generous donation from the Buick, Pontiac and GMC Division of General Motors. This wonderful gift came from GM's desire to honor American veterans in their military by making a donation to a charity, a charity that cares for the children and families of those who have served our country.

So, they made a commitment to donate \$100 for every Buick, Pontiac and GMC vehicle sold nationwide during their 2006 Memorial Day campaign. On July 26, Mr. John Larson, the General Manager of the Buick, Pontiac and GMC Division, along with members of his executive team, traveled to the National Home and presented us with an outstanding gift of \$3.5 million. (Applause)

In addition to this amazing donation, the GM campaign of the commercial advertisement on the Internet, and through working with local deal-

erships that work together with many of you, the VFW Posts and Auxiliaries locally, they brought nationwide attention to both the National Home and to the VFW, and the positive attention they brought has been truly remarkable for us.

As Commander-in-Chief Mueller said when he first heard of the news, it was like a little piece of heaven falling on the National Home. This generous gift from General Motors will greatly assist the VFW National Home for Children. It will help us invest in the future of our country by strengthening and expanding our programs and services for our nation's veterans and their families.

However, this donation must be considered as a one-time blessing. It can never replace the need for the ongoing support from you, the individual member or that of the Posts. The National Home Board of Trustees will be meeting in October, at which time I know they will be finalizing decisions on priorities for the use of this wonderful gift.

They will do so with the long-term business interest of the National Home foremost in their mind. While this year we have greeted thousands of members and others who have visited the National Home in this last year, the real work of the National Home goes on each and every day as we serve the children and families of our nation's veterans.

The families we serve are your families, and we are able to do so because of your generosity and your caring. So, if you are ever able to, please visit the National Home. Once you are there and once you see the environment of love and support offered by the staff, once you see the impact that your generosity has on these children and families, you will understand why it is so important to continue the work that you began over 80 years ago.

Thank you for your many years supporting your National Home, and thank you for all you will do in the years ahead. The Home will always need you as we work together to meet the needs and to honor America's veterans.

Now, Commander, it is my honor to present to you and your members the 2006-2007 Buddy Poppy Child, Samantha Spitzley.

REMARKS BY BUDDY POPPY CHILD SAMANTHA SPITZLEY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Samantha, I would like for you to come up here and I would like to present you with my pin. If I may, can I give you a hug? Thank you so much for being here. You can step up there. Please give another round of applause for her. (Applause)

BUDDY POPPY CHILD SPITZLEY: Hi. My name is Samantha Spitzley. I live in the VFW National Home for Children. I live with my mom and my brothers Lucas and Travis. I am in the third grade in school, and my teacher helps me with the lessons. I love living in the VFW National Home, so that is the reason I will share this with you.

It is only the VFW National Home for Children in the United States, and that makes it special and makes us a part of a small community. We have fun activities. I have my own bedroom for the first time. I had to share it with my brothers before I moved there.

Everyone is so nice. I get to raise a bunny with some help. There is a playground, computer lab and a gym. My favorite part of living there so far has been to be with the Cooties at Easter. I thank you guys for letting me

live here in my prayers every night.

We get to live there because my grandpa, both of my grandpas, were in the Army. My Grandpa Castle was in World War II and he received two victory medals. My Grandpa Spitzley was in the Army but is no longer alive, but he would love to see my house.

We came here after my mom and dad got divorced, and it makes me feel safer and my mom. She has more time to play with me and all my new friends. I wanted to be Buddy Poppy Child, so I could thank all of you that have given so much time and money so I can live here. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Samantha, you did a beautiful job on that. I think I will ask you to stand here and help me. You did a fine job. Also, we are going to be breaking here, so I am going to invite Samantha back tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock to come into the hall.

I am sure if you-all have one of your pins she would be glad to accept that, and if you-all have a donation to give to the National Home for a project, I am going to challenge all of you. I have \$20 here that I would like to present to you for your projects and everything else here. You will come back tomorrow morning at 9:00. (Applause)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREEN: Even though during his years the Commander has so many obligations, in support of the National Home, he rearranged his schedule twice to come and help open the new duplex so we could help two more families. The staff have a little something they wanted to send to him because he was able to come both for the ground-breaking, where he literally was on the end of a shovel, and for the ribbon-cutting in May. That is the hat he wore.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: This is a box with a lot of pictures when I was at the National Home. Thank you all so very much. This is very special, Samantha, and I thank you for being here this morning. We will see you tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock. You have a great day, and we will talk later.

I would encourage everyone, if they have not had the opportunity, to go visit the National Home to see the new cottage that is dedicated up there. It is a beautiful home and we should be proud of it. I encourage you, if you get an opportunity, to go visit the National Home.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, originally we had scheduled the General Director of Retail Development for the Buick, Pontiac and GMC Division to be here with the National Home and to receive an award. However, we got a little bit of a hurricane problem out there, and had some flights cancelled. The gentleman cannot come. We will take it up to General Motors and make a presentation there.

Before the Commander-in-Chief gives his closing remarks for this morning, I do have some announcements to make. Remember, we have the workshops starting today. So, please try to attend the workshops. I will read them off and let you know where they are.

The Kansas City staff and the Washington, D.C., staff have put in a lot of work to make sure these are informative workshops for you. We would appreciate it if you would go to them. If you find any ways we can improve them, let me know and we will make some changes as we go along for next year's convention. Unless we receive input from you, as far as we are concerned, everything is copacetic.

First of all, the Senior Vice Commanders and Senior Vice Presidents luncheon, as I mentioned yesterday, is at 1:00 o'clock in Charlie 4. The Junior Vice Commanders and Junior Vice Presidents luncheon is in Delta 3 at 1:00 o'clock. The Chaplains Workshop is at 1:00 o'clock in Delta 5. The VFW Program Workshop is at 1:00 o'clock in Charlie 1.

The Uplink/MIP Membership Joint Workshop is at 1:00 o'clock in Rooms A-1 through A-6. The Communications Public Affairs Workshop is from 1:30 to 3:00 in Delta 6. The VFW Post Insurance Program is at 2:00 o'clock in Alpha 7. The VFW Health Care and Benefits Forum is at 2:00 o'clock in Alpha 9.

Remember, we have the Patriotic Rally this afternoon. Line up starts at 3:30 for that. The doors for the Patriotic Rally, which will be right in this room, will be open at 4:00 o'clock p.m. The Past Commanders-in-Chief will meet with the Commander-in-Chief today at 1:30 in his suite in the Grand Sahara, Room 2334.

Reception workers, please remember you are meeting for the conference tomorrow at 2:00 o'clock p.m., and in Delta 3. The incoming Junior Vice Commanders-in-Chief would like to see all Adjutant Quartermasters of the Southern Conference by the stage. You can start moving over there. He would like to see you now.

The Cramer-Sisk-Banas Reception is today at 10:30 in the Atlantis Hotel, second floor, Ballroom A. A meeting will be held for the 1978-'79 Department Commanders and Presidents on Wednesday at the Grand Sahara, Room 2350, at 3:00 o'clock p.m.

Commanders and Presidents of the 2000-2001 year will meet at VFW Post 921, 1255 Ferris Lane tonight at 7:00 o'clock p.m.

The 1999-2000 Past State Department Commanders Reception will be Tuesday night after the Patriotic Rally in the McKinley Room at the Grand Sahara Hotel by invitation only.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, those are all the announcements I was given this morning.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: National Sergeant-at-Arms Hoffman, put the room in order for recess.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir. Commander-in-Chief, I will call upon the National Chaplain, please.

(Whereupon, the Benediction was given by National Chaplain Dan Derieg, followed by the Salute to the Colors.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Your order has been obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: This 107th National Convention will stand in recess until 8:00 o'clock a.m., tomorrow morning where business will resume with the Nomination of Officers. Thank you, comrades. We are now in recess.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 11:15 o'clock a.m.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2006

(The Third Business Session of the 107th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Reno, Nevada, was called to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief James Mueller presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I call this 107th National Convention back into session. At this time I will call upon National Chaplain Dean Derieg for the prayer.

OPENING PRAYER

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: Our Heavenly Father, again we come asking your special blessing here in this place as we go about the business of this great organization. Lord, we thank you for what you have allowed us to do and we ask now that you go with us and continue to bless us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms Hoffman led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, National Sergeant-at-Arms.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I will again call upon the Credentials Committee, Dave Butters, for a report on the credentials.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE DAVID BUTTERS (Post 475 – Delaware): As of the close of business yesterday, August 29th, the delegates registered at this convention, total Post delegate strength, 10,809. Total Department Commanders, 46. Total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 32. Total National Officers, 38. That is for a grand total of 10,925.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, Dave. Thank you for the great job.

COMRADE DAVID BUTTERS (Post 475 – Delaware): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

INTRODUCTION OF PARLIAMENTARIAN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, at this time I would like to introduce my Parliamentarian that will be serving, and I have asked

him to serve, Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic. He joined the VFW in 1991. He is a Life Member of Post 7980, Millstadt, Illinois. He earned his membership during service in the Persian Gulf, and was an International Guard Security Specialist.

Fritz has served as the Department of Illinois Judge Advocate since 1999, and was the Judge Advocate General in 2003-2004. I want to thank you for serving here.

My fellow comrades, I will be leaving right now to go visit the Ladies Auxiliary, and I have asked that the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Gary Kurpius preside.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Kurpius assumed the chair.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: I will call on Adjutant General Kent.

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, standing behind me are the VFW National Sergeants-at-Arms. I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to a group of comrades we see annually at our National Convention and our Washington Conference. They are the first ones in the hall, and among the last to leave. They work long hours in order to ensure the success of our national meetings.

These folks are strictly volunteers, so obviously this is a labor of love for them. I am sure that everyone recognizes what an outstanding job they do for the VFW.

It is my privilege to introduce the National Sergeant-at-Arms from Post 6240, the Department of Kansas, Barry Hoffman.

Barry has been a Sergeant for 20 years. He is a Retired Colonel with the Kansas National Guard and is a Military Analyst with Northrup Grumman, Missions Systems Sector. He is also a Past Post All-American Commander and All State Post Commander.

Keith McDonald has been a Sergeant for 13 years and is a member of Post 2275 in California. He is retired as a chief petty officer from the United States Navy and is a Past All-American Post Commander and is currently District One Commander, California.

Gary Barringer has been a Sergeant for 11 years. He is a member and current Quartermaster of Post 9134 in North Carolina, as well as a Past Department Commander of North Carolina. He works as a technician for the North Carolina National Guard.

Joe Schirmers has been a Sergeant for 44 years and is a member of Post 4847 in Minnesota. He is retired from the Great Northern Railroad and has over 47,000 hours of volunteer service at VA Hospitals.

Ed Villaume has been a Sergeant for seven years and is a member of Post 6827 in Florida. He is retired from the St. Petersburg Police Department after 25 years of service. He is not here because of illness in his family.

Bryan O'Brien has been a Sergeant for six years and is a member of Post 2394 in Massachusetts. He is a Past All-State Post Commander, Past District and County Council Commander. He has been with the Massachusetts

Turnpike Authority for 23 years and is presently a Senior Controller.

Jim Galen, the newest member, has been a Sergeant for five years and is a member of Post 6802 in Michigan. He is a Past All-State Commander and served as Post Quartermaster for 18 years. He is employed as an Assembly Technician for General Motors.

Joy Ausman has been a Sergeant for 11 years and is a member of Post 1720 in Minnesota. She is a past Post Commander and district quartermaster and commander. She recently moved to Lewiston, ID, where she is an environmental health & Safety manager for a forest products company.

These are the comrades we depend on when difficulties arise. Sometimes we forget to express our gratitude, so at this time I want to publicly say "thank you" to each and every one of you. All of you do a great job.

I am proud of the professional way in which you always conduct yourselves and I am honored to have the opportunity to serve with you. On behalf of the entire organization, thank you for your service. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF JAN SCRUGGS

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: This morning we have with us a man whose name is familiar to nearly every Vietnam veteran.

In 1979, this combat-wounded Vietnam veteran conceived an idea to honor those who served and sacrificed in our nation's longest war, to build a memorial that would help heal those who served and those who were embroiled in the bitter politics here at home.

His perseverance resulted in the 1982 dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which is now the most visited memorial in our nation's capital.

Comrades, I present to you the founder and president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, a Life Member of VFW Post 2979 in Washington, D.C., Mr. Jan Scruggs.

REMARKS BY MR. JAN SCRUGGS

COMRADE JAN SCRUGGS: It is a pleasure to be here. I appreciate the very kind introduction here, and I just have to be honest, I have to point out that I am a Washington lawyer. You know, if you took every lawyer in Washington and actually laid them down in the Potomac River, not only would they stretch for four miles, but most people would just as soon leave them laying there.

I want to thank each and every one of you for belonging to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I want to thank you for your support of the troops and, of course, your untiring efforts to help those who served in all our conflicts, including the current conflict, and an awful lot of these guys and ladies returning need help.

You are the people who are doing it, and your efforts are appreciated as volunteers. I am very proud to be a Life Member, of course, who served in the Vietnam War back in 1969. I was an infantry soldier and had an opportunity to get myself wounded and served with some really, really fine people.

But in 1979, I just had this idea that I was going to build the National Memorial in Washington, D.C., and it was going to contain all the names of the casualties from the Vietnam War. I would like to point out that the first veterans organization to give a financial contribution, and this was at the very beginning of the project, was the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and this was engineered by a fellow that ran the Washington Office named Cooper Holt, who was there for many of the struggles and battles that took place to build that monument.

In 1979, actually three years later, we had the memorial built, funded, completed. It was done. It was a rather extraordinary time. It was certainly not an easy project, but it is now the most visited in Washington, D.C., the most visited memorial actually in the United States of America.

But for the last six years, and we have had an awful lot of help from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we have been fighting for a Visitors Center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. I am going to be showing you this Visitors Center. The legislation to allow us to build this was enacted in November, 2003, and then 2006 we had another piece of legislation passed to allow us to have a site for the memorial.

We had so much opposition inside Washington from the bureaucracy that we literally, with the help of a guy named Congressman Richard Pombo of California, had to get another bill passed to allow us to build the Visitors Center. Now, when you compare this to the fact that originally it only took three years to get a bill passed and get the wall built, it took over three years to get the bill passed to let us build the Visitors Center, and then once the bill got passed two years later we had to get another bill passed.

So, it was a long fight, and it finally ended three weeks ago when we got complete approval to build this center across the street from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Because there is a need for synergy between the exhibits of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the memorial itself, there is also a need to separate the Visitors Center from the memorial as to not intrude with the visitor's experience, but to have this as an ancillary experience for those who are more interested in it.

So, for just about two years a group has been exploring themes and recommendations for the content of the center. It is chaired by General Barry McCaffrey. It is an Advisory Board consisting of educators, historians, war journalists. Joe Galloway is on it. We have executives from the National Park Service and other federal agencies, veterans groups. Especially we want to thank Mike Gormalley with the Veterans of Foreign Wars for his efforts on that group.

A key element has been to explore the sense of place. That is the relationship of the center to the memorial and what that means for the visitor. Let me show you a quote that we hope to capture some of the spirit of this in the Visitors Center. This quote says, "This is a place where memories wave, where hearts heal. This is a place where people can feel what Lincoln called the mystic cords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart, and heart's stone all over this broad land."

The center will be a place to reveal the humanity mention of war as well as to celebrate the values of service and the bonds of loyalty and friendship that will enhance the experience of the memorial by providing a journey through deeper layers of story telling, honoring and history.

The center is about reinvigorating memory for all visitors, whether or not they have a direct connection to the Vietnam War, and it will allow visitors to see behind the wall, but look not at the war but at the human experience of war, and at the web of lives that are affected by it.

Some of the goals will be next to enhance the memorial experience, to honor those who died and, of course, all who served, to make the names visible and to encourage younger visitors to learn more. The center will serve people of all ages, from all walks of life.

Veterans, family members, school groups will compose some of the audience. We do get about four million visitors a year to the memorial, but the interpretive components of the center will be designed to address the entire rank of visitors and will be developed to create the right set of experiences to allow for reflection, celebration and learning.

You know, a problem we face today is that the memorial is actually over many of the people who visit it. The point of the memorial center is for young people, young Americans, to have a profound and extraordinary experience, not just to walk by and sort of scratch their heads, wondering what that was all about, and about 40 percent of the visitors to the memorial are under age 25, and the memorial itself is rapidly approaching its twenty-fifth birthday.

Our development of the concept of the center, we did a lot of listening and research, discussion. We came across this quote from July, 1980, when President Carter signed the legislation into law for the Visitors Center. It said, "In honoring those who answered the call of duty, we do not honor war, we honor the peace they sought, the freedoms they fought to preserve, and the hope that they held out to a world that is still struggling to learn how to settle differences among people and among nations without resorting to violence."

It was notes like this and the many quotes from soldiers' letters home that led us to create an over-arching construct for the center, which will be to use the values of servicemen and women as a lens through which to understand and memorialize those who sacrificed and served.

Wording like loyalty, duty, respect, service, honor, integrity, courage provide a framework for a deeper understanding of the experiences of the soldiers, sailors, Marines, nurses and others who served and who serve today. These words need to be elevated and their meanings restored because they have been corrupted over time and in large part due to the Vietnam War. The controversy surrounding the Vietnam War has hurt our nation, our trust in government.

The center will convey to visitors that service to our country, military and non-military, is a noble thing. But this will be a military experience, as a walk through the visitors' experience of the center, first of all, making the names visitor.

Upon entering the center, the visitors will encounter a vast medial wall of soldiers' faces and names. This montage of faces slowly cycles through all of the men and women who had their birthday on that particular day. In other words, the photographs will change every day based upon the birthday of the casualty. Information will appear on every screen who the soldiers were, where they served, along with other images, letters and remembrances left for that individual.

Families can come to the center on their loved one's birthday and find

his or her face on a screen. Moving along the series of walkways visitors will continually encounter different views of this wall effaces as they journey down the main space of the center at the lower level.

Visitors can access interaction stations to call up for more information by name and other criteria. Now, values are so important to young people, to all of us. But these values of military service are something that unless you have been in the military, you may not completely understand them.

In time, the images of the faces and names will fade and the words such as respect, loyalty, courage, duty, service, honor and integrity will appear. These words will then be combined with excerpts from letters, letters from the battlefields of Vietnam. As the faces permeate the space so now will the values evoked by those who served.

On the subject of respect and important value, here is a great letter from Vietnam. "I tried to take great pride in my unit, the men I worked with. I feel honored to have them call me a friend. In my heart, I know that these are the men who build America, not the rich or the well-educated. I hope to spend my life in their behalf and try to help them all I can. All my best, Al."

On loyalty, a very interesting letter from a fellow named Rick. He says, "I don't like being over here, but I am doing the job that must be done. I am fighting to protect and maintain what I believe and what I want to live in, a democratic society. If I am killed while carrying out this mission, I want no one to cry or mourn. I want people to hold their heads high and be proud of me for the job I did. Love, Rick."

On the subject of courage, a very excellent letter from Second Lieutenant Vic Taylor. "I watched and waited for those Marines about to go into battle. Some were standing watch, some were readying equipment, some slept or rested, but all were quiet. No nervous jabbering, no false bravado, no whining, no over-melodramatics. They were professionals."

Now showcasing the collection of items left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial will be a most intriguing task. Directly across from the medial wall of faces will be a service of dramatic glass cases that visitors can walk around and through as they move downward to the lower level. These cases contain groupings and selections of artifacts and letters that have been left at the memorial.

A direct visual and emotional connection between the faces and the artifacts will be made. This will create a dialogue between the living and the dead, and will highlight a unique and ongoing act of people paying tribute. More than 85,000 items have been left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. These gifts make a unique and very powerful collection representing not only individual memories but also part of the ongoing conversation about the memorial and about the impact of the Vietnam War on America today.

The power of the collection is multi-layered. Things of meaning when they are left at the wall, and they acquire more meaning when placed there. Some objects are memorials to specific individuals, other are left as tokens of shared experiences. Display selections from the collection will create a very profound visual narrative and emotional experience.

Letters home, personal letters from the servicemen and women from individual authentic unfiltered glimpses into the realities of war. These letters are direct and moving testimonials about hope and heroism. They also

describe the day-to-day existence, the boredom, the fatigue, along with fear and courage of those who served.

The vast archived and personal resources of the material will allow for a careful selection for display in various exhibits in the center. Display of piece from the collection will be punctuated periodically by individual stories. These items will illustrate loss, the grieving as well as celebrate the bonding of friendship, love and happy memories.

Many of the stories are inspirational and very eloquent, while others show the universal bond that binds all veterans together. Examples such as these show the range of stories embodied in some of the artifacts and letters, and here are some of the letters. There is a hat left with a poem that says, "When we touched the wall, we knew you were there."

Someone left a watch stopped at 10:03 by Gary, who was always asking his buddy the time. He wrote, "When I held you in my arms, you felt cold. I would not let them take you from me as long as I could. Then you were gone."

Tassels were left from commencements and mortarboards showing fathers listed on the wall and that their toddlers grew up and graduated from high school and college. A painting of an Army nurse left at the Vietnam Women's Memorial, dedicated to all nurses and women who served in the war.

A letter to dad that says, "I know you would like Lisa. You could not ask for a better wife, dad, and now you have a granddaughter. Her name is Megan. When she sees your picture, she says that's my grandfather."

There will be a historical time line at the Vietnam Veterans Center. As visitors move through and pass the collection of cases they can view a time line of the war which provides a historical context and background. The time will be a consistent and straightforward chronology of the military events to give an overview of the span of the war and of the key activities that occurred there.

Layers of information on the time line will include maps and charts, letters to and from home about specific events and battles; some of the iconic imagery of the period. We are focusing the time line on Vietnam. We are not going to be fighting the war in Vietnam over again by focusing on the domestic controversy over that conflict.

We will also show the history of the people. The separate exhibit will tell the story how the memorial was built beginning with the 1977 Washington Post article that I wrote, and in which I called for a National Memorial. It will cover the selection of Maya Lin.

We had the largest architectural competition held in the history of Western civilization at the time in order to select the design, and she won. She is from Ohio, now living in New York. We will show pictures of the ground-breaking ceremony, dedication, visits by every President since Ronald Reagan, the dedication of the Three Servicemen statue, the Vietnam Women's Memorial statue, the Memory Plaque.

The exhibit will demonstrate how the memorial played a unique role in American culture, and has deeply influenced the way Americans memorialize and pay tribute since it was dedicated. We will have a resource center where visitors would like to access deeper levels of information, can find out about educational programs and hear a series of learning tools and interactive stations directing them to ways to access sources to learn more

about the war itself, films, montages, photographs, music, oral histories, literature.

There will be special topics. There will be an opportunity to have changing exhibits in the memorial itself to focus on particular groups, and this will draw repeat visitors to the center. Different military units can be highlighted. Different racial and ethnic groups who served in the war, different operations, veterans returning to Vietnam, as I know many of the leadership of the VFW has done. Veterans today, and the great achievements that veterans have been able to make will be a part of that.

One of the people who is on our Board of Directors and Advisors is James Kimsey, who was a Green Beret in Vietnam and came back and started a company called America Online. What a great thing to tell people about. A veteran in Vietnam saw the delivery of ammunition and supplies, started a company called Federal Express, whose name is Fred Smith.

So, those who served came back and made some significant contributions. As visitors leave the center, and this is the point, a connection will be made between those who served in Vietnam and the larger national story that is told on our nation's mall.

Values like loyalty, duty, respect belong to all soldiers from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War, to World War I, World II, to the present time. As visitors read an eloquent sentence of quotes and view the images of soldiers from various wars, they will know that in honoring those who served in Vietnam, we are honoring all soldiers.

The faces of soldiers will be shown and these words to those who served and to those who sacrificed, to those who wept, to those who waited because of all wars. Above it will be the words and voices of those who served. As an example, I read this quote: "War is a hell of a big thing. It takes real strength, not just to fight in it but just to live in it and to see it for all it is, and to not be destroyed spiritually by it, but somehow to be made better. It takes courage to suffer its miseries, hard-held, impossibly enduring selfless true in all its blood-stained filthy aching grandeur. But during all of it can one expect moments of beauty and compassion, and they get you through and they make you stronger." This quote is from Senator John McCain from the great state of Arizona.

It has been said that one must touch the heart before you can reach the mind. This is what the center will do. The exhibits and the experience we create, the center does this for the entire range of people who will go there.

It will show the connection between all military veterans. It will be an extraordinary and exceptional place, a learning experience unlike any other in the entire world. We do have to raise all the money privately. We have recently announced a \$10 million gift from Time Warner.

General Colin Powell, who is the honorary chairman of the organization, was very instrumental in getting us this gift. We have some very significant corporate leaders who are going to be helping us. We think the total cost of this should be between \$75 million and \$100 million, and by Washington standards it is not a great deal of money.

However, when you try to raise that kind of money, it is a daunting task. The Veterans of Foreign Wars have been working with us from the beginning, and we are looking forward to further support. We just want to get this over with, get it built and dedicated. We believe we can break ground in less than three years once we have the money in hand and the final

design, approval for the shell that will house this underground Visitors Center, which is mandated by the United States Congress.

So, ladies and gentlemen, thank you all for your support, and God bless you all. Thank you all very much. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Jan, thank you for all that you do.

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION TO ROBERT MILBY

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Now, the individual we are about to honor has dedicated his leadership and knowledge to ensure the success of his Post for 50 consecutive years. During his half-century of service he has willingly gone above and beyond while serving as Post Quartermaster of VFW Post 6450, Chester, West Virginia.

His effort to serve veterans, serve members in the community and his record of service to the VFW has been marked by numerous achievements and deserves all of the recognition that we can bestow.

In keeping with the spirit of volunteerism that exemplifies what Comrade Robert Milby has accomplished during his tenure of 50 years as Post Quartermaster, I am pleased to present him with this special Certificate of Recognition. Please recognize Robert Milby. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Certificate of Recognition presented to Robert Milby.

"In grateful recognition of the distinguished service you have provided Burge-Casto Post 6450, Chester, West Virginia, during 50 consecutive years as Post Quartermaster. Your dedication, knowledge and outstanding leadership, played an integral role in making this Post one of the most prosperous and dynamic in the nation and the backbone of the local community to which it services and belongs.

"The Veterans of Foreign Wars owes its growth and success to exemplary veterans such as yourself who continue to unselfishly work toward achieving the high goals and principles we establish for ourselves.

"It is with the highest honor that we present this Certificate of Recognition to you for your remarkable accomplishments and stellar achievements during the half-century of devotion to your fellow veterans and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 30th day of August, 2006." Signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – COMRADE ROBERT MILBY

COMRADE ROBERT MILBY (Post 6450 – West Virginia): I have been fortunate to serve with many good Commanders. We started out in the spare room of a service station, and we now own half a block in the city. The property is valued at half a million dollars, but it would not be without the cooperation of the officers and staff. We have Desert Storm officers, Vietnam officers, mixed in with us World War II fellows. This has been a

successful operation. It wasn't a one-man's job. Thank you. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: I now would like to call on the Junior Vice designee, Glen Gardner, for some announcements.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Department of Texas): When they need fillers, they always call on me, unaccustomed to speaking as I am. A little over a year ago, we started talking about on Wednesday night at the National Convention having a joint reception, which would encompass all of the 54 Departments, instead of just the 14 Southern Conference states as we have done in the last six or seven years.

With a lot of help from a lot of people, we have been able to put together the event that you will see tonight at San Raphael Park. I want to thank Vanessa Kane for all her help and support, and especially I want to thank the Auxiliary President for the State of Nevada and her husband, Bill, because without the ground support here in Reno, we wouldn't have been able to do what we are going to be able to do.

We also want to thank Mike Gormalley and the Foundation, who were able to secure a \$10,000 donation from Anheuser-Busch, and a \$10,000 donation from Lockton Insurance, which will help finance the event this evening. For those of you who have been designated by your Department, the four individuals that we asked from each Department to be volunteers to help set things up, we will remind you that buses will leave the Hilton Hotel, the Grand Sahara Hotel, at 1:00 o'clock.

So, those that are volunteers should be either on the bus or at San Raphael Park at 1:00 o'clock this afternoon to help set up and get everything ready for tonight. Those of you who are volunteers, when you get to the park this afternoon, we will give you a special name tag that says "Volunteer". That way we will be able to hopefully provide you with some food this afternoon, if you don't come back to the hotels, and some water and some other refreshments while we are doing the setup time.

This afternoon, the Departments will be able to go into your booth area at about 4:00 o'clock p.m. to do any other decorating that you want to set up. Now, the event will start this evening at 7:00 p.m. There will be no food, there will be no alcohol, there will be nothing that will start before 7:00 p.m. The buses will leave the Grand Sahara and the Hilton, formerly the Hilton Hotel, beginning at 6:30.

The event runs from 7:00 to 9:30. The buses will run from 6:30 to 10:00. So, feel free to ride the buses. If you are driving there, the San Raphael Park is located at the far end of Virginia Street, and your maps will tell you how to get there.

We hope that you will come out this evening. We hope that everybody has a good time and that you will enjoy yourselves. I think by all the Departments participating we will have a great event this afternoon and tonight, and hopefully it is going to be one of the highlight of your convention here in Reno. So, thank you very much, and I thank all of you that helped put this thing together. Thank you, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

INTRODUCTION OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL JACK STULTZ,
CHIEF OF ARMY RESERVE

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Our next speaker is Lieutenant General Jack Stultz. Lieutenant General Stultz entered active duty in 1974 after receiving his commission from the Reserve Officer Training Corps at Davidson College, North Carolina.

After completing the engineer officer basic course and airborne school, Lieutenant General Stultz was assigned to the 20th Engineer Battalion, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where he served as Platoon Leader, Executive Officer and Company Commander.

Lieutenant General Stultz left active duty in June, 1979, to pursue a civilian career. At the same time, he began his Army Reserve career with assignment to the 108th Division, Infantry OSUT.

In 1987, he was assigned to the 32nd Transportation Group, Tampa, Florida. In 1990, the 32nd Transportation Group was mobilized and deployed in support of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

In April, 1995, Stultz took command of the 257th Transportation Battalion. The battalion deployed to the Balkans in March, 1997, in support of Operation Joint Endeavor/Joint Guard.

Stultz assumed command of the 32nd Transportation Group in January, 1998. He assumed the duties of Deputy Commanding General of the 143rd Trans Com in 1999. Stultz deployed to Kuwait in October, 2002, as Commander of the 143rd Trans Com (Forward), in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In October, 2003, he was assigned as Director of Movements, Distribution and Transportation, Combined Forces Land Component Command Kuwait. From January to August, 2004, he was responsible for port and ground transportation operations for the largest movement of forces since World War II.

After 22 months in theater, Stultz returned to the United States in August, 2004.

Please welcome a fellow veteran, Lieutenant General Jack Stultz. (Applause)

REMARKS – LIEUTENANT GENERAL JACK STULTZ

COMRADE STULTZ: Thank you very much. They said we are running ahead of schedule, so that means I have got more time to talk, because I can talk about soldiers all day long here. First and foremost, let me tell you, my name is Jack Stultz. I am an American soldier.

I am also a warrior citizen, and I will tell you about that in a few minutes. But I am also one of you. I am a member of the Veteran of Foreign Wars. I am proud to be here. As was mentioned, in the 32-plus years that I have served in the military on active duty, off active duty, being deployed, I understand what it means to be a soldier and I understand how important support of our soldiers is.

So, the first thing I want to tell you before I say anything else is thank you. Thank you for what you have done for our country's veterans, for the sacrifices that you have made, for the patriotism and dedication that you have shown throughout your service careers. But also thank you for what you are doing for my soldiers. You are critical to my mission and you real-

ly need to understand that. I understand that, because our soldiers depend on the support that you provide for them and their families, and you are critical. I am going to talk about that in a minute.

Now, my staff prepared for me a speech and they prepared a set of slides and all that. I am not going to use that. I am going to use one slide and that's it. I just want to talk to you from the heart. I will warn you ahead of time, when I start talking about soldiers, I get all choked up. So, forgive me for that. But go ahead and put up the first slide.

What I want to talk to you about is the Army Reserve and what our vision is. When I joined the Army Reserve in 1979, we were a strategic legacy force. We told soldiers all we ask is one weekend a month, two weeks in the summer. That's all we ask. We have changed that equation.

The Army Reserve first and foremost is a community-based organization. Our soldiers live and thrive in your community. I don't have the luxury of taking like on active duty and moving soldiers around this country and their families. I can't PCS a soldier from Columbia, South Carolina, to Louisville, Kentucky.

That soldier lives and works in Columbia, South Carolina. He is tied to that community. So, we have to recognize that we are a community-based organization, and that is why you are key, because your local VFW organizations are also part of that community.

We are linked at the hip. You are supporting us and providing support for our soldiers and their families, and then you are allowing me to take those soldiers and defend our nation and provide security for our nation.

Now, we are a community-based federal operational force. Let me emphasize operational. I just told you we used to be one weekend a month, two weeks in the summertime. We are no longer that. We are an operational force now.

When I joined the Army Reserve in 1979, I joined the 108th Training Division, Charlotte, North Carolina, the Infantry Training Division. I said, "What is our mission? What do we do?" They said, "Well, as a Company Commander, you have drill sergeants and you go down to Fort Benning, Georgia, in the summertime and you train infantry trainees, and you conduct this 13-week one-station unit training for the infantry trainees.

I had just come off active duty. I had just come out of Fort Campbell, Kentucky. I was pretty rural. I said that is great. So, I went to my first summer camp in the summer of 1979. I got there on Sunday, Monday morning we had the Brigade Commander stand up and give us his priorities and briefings. The Brigade Commander said, "Okay. The first priority, who is in charge of the end-of-camp party? The second priority, who is getting the beer for the party? The third priority, who is getting the pavilion where we are going to hold the party?"

I looked around and said, "What the hell have I got myself into? What kind of an organization is this?" But that was the Army Reserve in 1979. We had a legacy structure that was never going to be called upon unless at some point the Russians came across the border and we had to fight the Russians and we had to go expand the training bases at Fort Benning and Fort Jackson.

Where is the 108th Division today? The 108th Division today is in Iraq. They are still a training division, but they are training Iraqi soldiers. They

are standing up the Iraqi Army. So, those same drill sergeants now are deployed in harm's way and it is a different world. I can guarantee you they are not worried about the end of the party.

They are trained and ready soldiers. We have changed the equation. Since September 11th, we have mobilized 160,000 Army Reserve soldiers. Now, we are authorized for 205,000. We have mobilized 160,000 soldiers. Now, 35,000 soldiers have volunteered to go back a second time for another tour.

Currently, today I have got almost 35,000 soldiers mobilized. Now, 25,000 plus of those are in 17 different countries around the world. Ten thousand of them are here in the United States. They are the drill sergeants that are running Fort Jackson, Fort Benning, Fort Leonardwood. They are the doctors and the nurses that are running the hospitals that are treating our wounded soldiers coming back from war.

They are the garrison organizations that are running the installations in places like Fort Carson, Fort Hood, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, Fort Dix, New Jersey. So, we are an operational force now. It is no longer one weekend a month, it is when the nation calls you are expected to answer.

The nation called us on September 11th. We have answered the call, and we are going to continue. This war on terrorism is going to be an enduring war. It is not going away any time soon. This nation's military cannot do the mission without the Reserve components, Army, Air, National Guard. All Reserve components together have to be in this fight.

That's why you are critical because we can't be in this fight without you. I need my soldiers focused on doing their mission, not worried about their families back home. I need people like you to take care of those families of those soldiers and provide the support you are providing, because when I have a soldier who loses focus on what he is doing in the war, I end up with a casualty.

I end up with a casualty with that soldier or some other soldier that is a casualty because that soldier lost his focus. When he knows somebody back home cares about his family and takes care of his family, he can focus on his mission. That's why you are so important.

Also, we changed this equation on the operational force. That creates a different kind of recruiting and retention challenge for us, because now we are not recruiting that soldier saying one weekend a month and two weeks in the summertime. Now, we are saying you be prepared to deploy when your nation needs you.

We are trying to build a model where we can get into predictability with our soldiers to say once every five years is when you can expect to be mobilized and deployed. That's the model we are trying to build right now. But we have got to get our fore-structure right to be able to do that.

Right now, I don't have enough forces to spread them out over five years. So I am depending upon soldiers who are great heroes to volunteer to go back for a second tour. I am not making them involuntarily return, but I am asking them if they are willing to go voluntarily.

I will give you an example. I was down in San Antonio, Texas, a few weeks ago, the 217th Transportation Company, heavy equipment transporters. These are those big Oshkosh vehicles that carry the M-1 tanks on the back of them. I had that unit with me over in theater in '03-'04. They

came back in 2004 when I came back.

They are going back again this summer because we need that capability in theater and we don't have enough heavy equipment transport companies. That company is 299 soldiers strong. It is a large organization. They command 96 of these heavy equipment transporters.

Sixty percent of that unit is going back voluntarily. They are volunteering. They are great heroes and are saying I am willing to go back and serve my nation again and put myself in harm's way. I will tell you the reason they are going back is because of the leadership.

They have got a great First Sergeant, they have a great Company Commander, and those soldiers are willing to follow them back into harm's way. That's the kind of heroes we have got right now in our Reserve components that are willing to step up time and time again. They deserve our support. They deserve everything we can give them.

Now, the other thing in our vision I will touch on, we are a federal operational force of skilled rich. We are citizens. Let me talk about skilled rich. The Army Reserve draws upon your community. You have got a lot of skilled rich soldiers out there that have civilian-acquired skills that the active force can't grow.

When we look at our civil affairs structure, we have city planners, power plant operators, police chiefs, fire chiefs, environmentalists. All these types of skills that we need when we are trying to rebuild Iraq that the active Army doesn't maintain. We bring that to the force.

I will give you a couple of examples. When I was over in Iraq in 2003, we were trying to get the Iraqi railroad back up. I had a soldier by the name of Bob Pelatier, a Lieutenant Colonel who works for, I think, CSX. It could be a different railroad. But he is a railroader back here in the United States.

So, we took Bob down into Baghdad and put him there with the Minister of Transportation and helped get the Iraqi railroads up and running again so we could take some of our trucks off the road and put the cargo on the Iraqi rail system. I got an e-mail from Bob about two months ago.

He said, "Sir, I am back on active duty. I am down at Fort Hood, Texas." I sent him an e-mail back and I said, "Bob, what are you doing?" He said, "Well, they had a train accident down here and damaged a tank, and they need somebody to come down here and figure the problem out and fix it."

The active Army looked around and said we don't have any railroaders, but somebody at Fort Hood said we had a guy by the name of Pelatier with us in Iraq. Where is he? They went and found him and brought him back on active duty to go down to Fort Hood now and work with the railroad down there to get it fixed. That's the kind of skilled rich capability that we are able to transfer over to the active force.

When I was in Bosnia in 1997, when I first got there, we had a hospital unit out of Fort Hood, Texas, down in Tuzla, and the evac rate was about 50 percent. If you had a soldier that got wounded and injured, and you sent him to the hospital, about half the time they evacuated him back to Landstuhl, Germany, for treatment back there. It was a black hole.

Once you evacuated a soldier back to Landstuhl, you never saw him again. Somehow or another he just got swallowed up in that German beer and that good life in Germany and never came back to Bosnia. That unit rotated out while I was there and was replaced by an Army Reserve Medi-

cal Unit.

The evac rate dropped down to about 10 or 15 percent. So, I went down and met with the hospital commander and I said, you know, what is the difference here? Suddenly we are getting our soldiers returned back to us, which is a good thing. But are they getting treated properly, because they are not getting evaced?

He looked at me and he said, "You don't understand." He said, "My guys, my doctors are a bunch of old folks." He said, "These guys are double Board Certified, these guys come from hospitals back in the U.S. where they are doing heart transplants. They would never send one of these kids back to one of these young doctors up in Germany. They will take care of him right here."

That's that added skill that the Army Reserve brings to the federal force. We are doing that every day right now in Kosovo, in Iraq. I have got my third medical command that is running the hospital right now in Baghdad, right outside of Baghdad, using those civilian doctors and nurses and all that we bring into the Army Reserves to treat the wounded soldiers, sailors, Marines over there, and keep them alive doing great things. That skilled rich piece, I can't tell you how much value that is for the Army Reserve.

Now, the next word in our vision is a skilled rich force of warrior citizens. I told you when I opened up here I am a warrior citizen. Let me explain what a warrior citizen is. My soldiers have to be warriors, but they also have to be citizens, because they are civilian warriors.

I need them to be warriors when I need them. I need them to be trained, ready, equipped to serve this nation, but I also have to allow them to be citizens. I have got to give them time with their civilian employer. I have got to give them time with their family.

So, I have got to create that balance of a warrior when I need them and a citizen when I can allow that to be. That's that five-year cycle that we are trying to get into place to rotate soldiers about every five years and give them four years back with their employers.

We owe that to the citizens, we owe that to the soldiers, their families. We owe that to the employers. That is a huge task as a new Chief of the Reserve that I am taking on. Build that stability into the soldiers' lives, and in the lives of their families and their employers.

Now, we are providing this operational capability on an expeditionary, but also on a domestic basis here at home. Last year when Hurricane Katrina hit, you saw the CH-47 Chinook Helicopters flying, evaluating people out of New Orleans. You saw those CH-47s hauling the sandbags and all that they were dropping into the dikes.

Those were my helicopters. They responded to Hurricane Katrina. Those same helicopters left there and went to Pakistan for earthquake relief. If you talk to the government of Pakistan, they will tell you that did more to cement relations with the U.S. in Pakistan than anything they have done before.

The fact that the people in Pakistan were suffering from the earthquake saw these helicopters daily coming in with relief supplies with the American Flag on the side. Those same helicopters from the Army Reserve left Pakistan and went to Afghanistan, and they are flying in Afghanistan now.

That's what kind of forces you have got in the Army Reserve, that this

nation calls upon when they need it, and that is what kind of soldiers you have got that will respond. We currently have a contingency plan in place that says if a hurricane hits anywhere on the coast of the United States, the Army Reserve forces in concert with the National Guard forces from those states will respond, providing medical help, providing military police, providing transportation, providing water, purification systems, providing transportation, providing power, whatever is needed for that state. We have got that on standby as a contingency force for domestic operations. So, what I am telling you is you can be proud of the Army Reserve.

Now, I am going to tell you what I said before, we have got a huge challenge. We have challenged the equation of what we are asking our soldiers to do. So, we have got to recruit and retain a new force. The good news is our recruiting is up. We are gaining strength. We are not where we want to be, but we are getting there.

Currently, we have got an authorization of about 205,000. We have got about 191,000 soldiers in our ranks and another 5,000 who are signed on contract waiting to come to initial entry training. So, we are at about 195,000, 196,000 strength against 205,000. We are not far off from where we should be.

The other good news is that we are meeting our retention goals. We are retaining 100 percent of what we need to be retaining. So far this year, we have re-enlisted over 5,000 first-term soldiers. This time last year, we had re-enlisted 2,500. We have doubled what we had.

Now, what does that tell you? That tells you that you have got a lot of soldiers who are committed, who are proud of what they are doing, and are willing to stay even though they know what the risks are to them when they are called upon. But you are key, you are key to my recruiting and retention.

I mean that from the heart, because when I recruit a soldier I re-enlist the family. When it comes to that soldier to make up his mind whether he is going to stay or not, it is a family decision. It is not his decision. If that family feels good about the way they are being treated by the military and the way they are being treated by the community, they will stick. They will stay with us.

If that soldier feels like he is being appreciated, appreciated by his leaders and also appreciated by his community, he will stick with us. One of the great things we are seeing right now in our recruiting, there are a lot of kids out there that just want to be somebody. They just want to be part of something.

So, they see these soldiers coming through the airports in uniform, coming home on R & R leave. They see civilians walking up and shaking their hands and patting them on the back, and clapping for them when they come off the plane.

We are getting a lot of kids out of high school that come say, "Hey, I just want to be somebody. Nobody has ever appreciated me. Can I be part of this organization?" You are causing that. Because what you are doing out in our local communities is you are showing appreciation for our soldiers and their families, and it is just not the soldiers that we are retaining, it is those other kids out there in the community that look and say, "Hey, I want to be a part of that, too. I want to be appreciated."

So, you are critical to my recruiting and retention. I can't do it without you. You need to understand the great soldiers that you have got out there. I was down at Brooke Army Hospital in San Antonio, Texas, about three weeks ago. It is a humbling experience.

The Brooke Army Hospital in San Antonio, we have the world's best burn treatment center. It is for all the soldiers, sailors and Marines that are critically burned in the theater with the improvised explosive device attacks. We bring them back to Brooke Army Hospital for treatment.

When you go in to visit a soldier, you have got to scrub up, you have got to put the gloves and mask on because they are so concerned about infection. I went in to see this young Marine, and he is in one of the rooms, and he was pretty badly turned. But you have just got to appreciate his spirit.

I am sitting there talking to him and he said, "Hey, sir, I want you to meet my wife." She came in the room. She was a Marine also. She is wearing a maternity dress. He leans over and winks at me. He said, "You have to do something while you are laying in this bed recuperating."

But the spirit of that young soldier, that young Marine, you know, he is not interested in getting out, he is not feeling sorry for himself, he is interested in getting better and getting back with his unit. I went down to the area of the hospital where they work with the amputees, the soldiers, sailors, Marines that have lost some of their limbs.

I had a soldier down there that had lost a leg, and he was back getting a new prosthesis. The gentleman down there, and this is a world-class organization that is developing these prostheses with electronics and everything else so that the soldiers can do almost everything they used to do.

The soldier said, "This is the third one I have broken." I looked at the director of the center there and I said, "What is wrong with the materials?" He said, "There is nothing wrong with the materials, sir. This guy is a Tae Kwon Do instructor, and every time he does a roundhouse kick on this thing, he torques it and breaks it. We have not found a prosthesis that is strong enough to take him on, but we are going to figure it out."

He said, "I can do everything I used to do before I lost my leg with my Tae Kwon Do. I just have got to find a prosthesis that will do it for me also." He is not feeling sorry for himself. He is getting on with his life. He is proud of what he has done.

We have got great soldiers like that all around. The last two Bronze Stars with V's that I pinned on soldiers before I left Iraq in 2004 were two Specs 4. One was a young female Spec 4. They were in a convoy going out to Falusia and we are taking the 82nd Airborne out and lost 282 Airborne soldiers in the attack.

In that one I didn't lose any of my soldiers luckily. But she just took over and started directing fire, evacuating wounded, just took charge. I said, "What caused you to do this?" She said, "Sir, these were my teammates. I didn't have a choice."

The other Spec 4 that I pinned the Bronze Star on was a gunner in the turret of the Hum V. I said, "What do you do?" He said, "Sir, I am a clerk. I am a clerk working the orderly room." I said, "What in the hell were you doing in the turret?" He said, "Sir, everybody gets a turn. Se keep a roster, cooks, clerks, mechanics. We all take turns manning the turret and the con-

voys. So, it was my turn."

They are great soldiers, willing to step up, willing to answer the call. You know, Tom Brokaw talks about the greatest generation. A lot of you out here are part of that generation that he is talking about that came back after World War II and rebuilt this country.

I will submit to you we have got the next greatest generation coming back now, these young soldiers, sailors and Marines. They are the future of this country and I can tell you they appreciate what they have got here and they are willing to step up and fight for it.

The morale in the theater is good, and if you ask any soldier how the food is, he will tell you it sucks. But we have a saying over there, you either get fit or you get fat, because the food is pretty good over there. So, they will talk about food, they will talk about something, but when it comes to talking about do they believe in their mission, they believe in it.

They believe in what they are doing and they believe in defending their country and they are willing to fight for it. We still have one soldier in the Army Reserve, Staff Sergeant Matthew Penn, who was captured April 9, 2004. His convoy in the 724th trans was attacked and he was captured, and we later saw him on video with the insurgents.

We have not got him back, but we have not forgotten about him, either. In fact, we just recently selected him for promotion to Staff Sergeant because he meets the eligibility criteria and he was boarded with the other soldiers in his unit, and he was selected.

We are going up in about a week and do a promotion ceremony for the other soldiers and we are going to have Matt's parents come and accept the promotion on his behalf as a POW. We have not forgotten about him.

So, let me just close by saying, as I have said before, thank you for what you are doing for us, thank you for your service to your country, your support, your patriotism, your dedication. Thank you for your support to my soldiers and their families. I need you, I am one of you, and we owe it to these soldiers, we owe it to their families. Our nation depends on them.

What we are going to do here in a few minutes after I finally end up talking here, is we are going to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the Army Reserve and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We are doing that to try to enhance this relationship.

I am not going to read the entire MOU, but let me just point out a couple of statements that we put in there. What we say is all parties recognize the value of a relationship between the Army Reserve and the veterans service organizations like the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It enhances our capabilities to provide additional quality of life services and support to their families and their soldiers.

What we need to do is establish better lines of communications. The Army Reserve will request that each of our family programs director that runs our family readiness and family support organizations contact the State Headquarters of each of the VFWs and establish that relationship.

Each of the local VFW Posts or family Reserve programs directors will make contact and establish a relationship there. We will provide updated lists of all of our organizations within each of the states, where they are, where their locations are and points of contacts, and we will advise our volunteers who work with our soldiers to start liaisons and working with

your volunteers.

We do a lot of welcome home ceremonies for soldiers and their families. We do a lot of farewell ceremonies for soldiers and their families. We do a lot while our soldiers are deployed for 12 months, where we bring the families in and thank them and see if they need any support.

What we need to do is to include you in that program so that you can be part of that, so that you can provide some of that support for our soldiers that are willing to provide, and you want to provide. Then, also we have got to start working together with our facilities, where we know you have local VFW Posts and we can have some family support activities maybe with your local Posts together and recognize those families, many of which you already know in your communities.

So, we are going to sign this official Memorandum of Understanding, but more importantly, it is not just a signature on a piece of paper, it is a mindset. That mindset is what I said before. I need you and I want you to be part of my Army Reserve.

This war on terrorism is all our war on terrorism. We are not an Army at war, we are a nation at war. September 11th was a wake-up call for us. We have continued to answer the call as a nation. We just need to work closer together to maintain support for all those great individuals that I talked about.

On April 17th, 2004, I lost a great soldier. He was a National Guard soldier from Kentucky, First Lieutenant Robert Henderson. Robert Henderson had just got in the theater with the 123rd National Guard Transportation Unit out of Bowling Green, Kentucky.

At that time we just had a resurgence of activity. The enemy had dropped five bridges along main supply route Tampa up north in Iraq. Also, they had attacked and cut off all our alternate supply route that went to the west. They had cut off our alternate supply route that went to the east.

So we very quickly had to make decisions to how we were going to get our lines of communications and support back open. So, I took part of the 1st Army Division that was getting ready to go back to Germany, we stopped them from going back, put them back on our heavy equipment transporters and started moving them back up.

On the 17th, one of my convoys got hit in a little town called Ankawa, which was just in the news this week, where they had a lot of heavy fighting again with the militia up there. Two days before they left, I was out seeing that convoy off.

Lieutenant Henderson came up to me and we were talking, and I said, "What are you doing in civilian life?" He goes, "I work for Lowe's Hardware." I said, "That is interesting. My wife is from North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, home of Lowe's Hardware."

He said, "Hey, sir, put in a good word for me." I said, "I don't have anything to do with Lowe's." He said, "I need to ask you something." I said, "What's that?" He said, "Is there any chance I could get some leave in June?" I said, "Why?" He said, "Well, we are expecting our first child and I would like to be there for it."

I said, "Look, Bob, I missed the birth of my first son. I was at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and I got deployed to Germany for retour exercise, and my wife gave birth while I was gone. That son is 28 years old now. She doesn't bring it up more than once a week. So they get over it. Okay?"

We just laughed and I said, "Yeah, we will get you home. You need to be home for that." He never made it home. Those are the families that deserve our support. They have made the ultimate sacrifice.

So what I am asking you for is – I told you I get choked up talking about soldiers. I need your help. So, we are going to sign this MOU and we are going to make this thing happen, because those great soldiers, sailors, Marines out there deserve it. So, again, thank you for what you are doing, what you have done and what you are going to do in the future. God bless our soldiers, God bless the Veterans of Foreign Wars and God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: The General and Commander-in-Chief Mueller will now sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the VFW and the U.S. Reserve Command.

(Whereupon, the Memorandum of Understanding was signed at this time.)

Also joining us at the table to sign the MOU is First Lieutenant Crystal Hover, who was the Company Commander of the 955th Engineer Company in Fort Leonardwood, Missouri. She also is one of your Associate Directors of Membership.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Mueller resumed the chair.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Samantha, I would like to invite you back up to the microphone. Please give Samantha Spitzley, the Poppy girl from the National Home, a warm welcome. (Applause) I think what is going to take place is you are going to walk around and see about getting some pins from some of the good comrades out there.

If they want to make a donation, you will gladly accept them. I want to thank you for joining me on the stage last night after the Patriotic Rally. It was a pleasure to have you up here. Thank you for being here this morning. Do you have some words to say?

BUDDY POPPY GIRL SPITZLEY: Hello. I would like to say thank you for supporting the National Home. I am ten years old. I live in Michigan at the VFW National Home. I like listening to music, drawing and horse-back riding.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, Samantha is going to walk down through the aisles, so if you have any pins or any money, please make a donation. Thank you for being here and I am just pleased to have you. I hope you get back up to the National Home to see you up there. Okay?

BUDDY POPPY GIRL SPITZLEY: Okay. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: While Samantha is going around, if I may have this opportunity of personal privilege to share my trip last October to Bolshoi, Russia, to visit with the Russians' veterans organization, and then to travel to Paris.

Yesterday morning, you heard Jack Nicholson talk about the American Battle Monuments. We have 21 cemeteries overseas that are maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission. After arriving back from Russia on Tuesday afternoon, I had the opportunity to visit the cemetery at Suresnes, which overlooks the City of Paris up on a hill.

I laid the wreath there, and that's where most of our World War I veterans are buried. The next day I traveled to Bayonne on a train close to Nor-

mandy. The next morning I arrived at the cemetery in Normandy. I went into the office for a briefing, and as we came out, it was pouring down rain. We went ahead to the memorial.

The memorial is to America's troops. It is a 35-foot bronze statue of a young male. I am standing there holding a wreath in a pouring-down rain, and I look over to my left and I see the Beaches of Normandy. I can't begin to explain the feeling that came over me.

I tried to imagine what World War II guys, our veterans, had to go through to take those beaches. After I laid the wreath, there was a group of school children, French school children, visiting there. They wanted to ask me why I came.

I told them I came to honor some of America's greatest heroes. They thanked me for giving them freedom. I walked through the cemetery and I visited one of the graves of Teddy Roosevelt's son that is buried there. The young man escorting us that day, his name was Vince.

Vince has worked there at the cemetery there for the last six years. A year ago, when the President came for the 60th anniversary, he had the opportunity to meet him, and he also had the opportunity to visit many of the Americans that came back for that anniversary.

One of them told him, he said, "I didn't come ashore at Normandy, I came ashore at Omaha Beach." He said, "When I did, shortly after I came ashore, I ran out of ammunition and I found a bunker. I went in the bunker, and I was confronted by a Nazi soldier. I thought he was going to shoot me, but he took off running." He said, "I would like for you, if you could, to take me out there and help me find that bunker."

They went out to Omaha Beach and sure enough they found the very bunker. As he went into the bunker, they were talking, and coming out Vince heard one of the other Frenchmen talking to a German soldier. It happened to be that very German soldier that was there 60 years ago. What a coincidence.

I asked Vince, "It is my understanding that the French don't like the Americans." He said, "That's not true. The French people love the Americans. It is our government that has a difference with your government." He said, "I have to tell my children, my grandchildren, if it wasn't for the American soldiers here I would probably be speaking German today." And how true that is.

From there, I left and flew to Rome on a Sunday morning. At approximately 9:00 o'clock, I arrived at Lantow, which there were probably 40 people waiting for me. A couple of them were World War II Italian soldiers. The news media was there.

As we walked through the cemetery, I was impressed on how well and meticulously it has been maintained. These cemeteries are truly shrines to America's veterans. As I got ready to lay the wreath, I asked the two World War II Italian soldiers and the lady that was at the counter of the organization to join me in laying that wreath.

After I laid the wreath, every one of them that was there wanted to shake my hand and thanked me for coming to honor the American soldiers there. On the way back up to the office, I was talking to the director, and I asked him, I said, "Charlie, do you still find artifacts here from World War II?" He said, "Oh, yes."

He said, "In fact, when we get up to the office I want to give you something." When we got to the office, he gave me two dog tags that were turned in to him within the last two months. One was from Wisconsin, the other one was from Louisiana.

I called the State Commander, Earl Banks, and asked him if he would help try and search to locate the family of this comrade. Shortly before we went to Washington, D.C., he called me and he told me he located the family, that the veteran had passed away and that he had lost most of his medals in a house fire.

His wife and his two daughters were still alive. I told him I would bring the medal, the dog tags to D.C. I gave them to him there and he told me that when he got back home at their convention they were going to present his medals and that dog tag to his family. They came to find out that his wife served in World War II, and they were planning on making her a Life Member of the VFW.

Before she could get to the convention, she was seriously ill, so they planned to present that at a later date. Tom hasn't got back to me from Louisiana. He has a lot going on with the hurricane. So, I will press him to see if he can go further no that. Hopefully, we should have our Ladies Auxiliary joining us shortly. Thank you, comrades.

PRESENTATION OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO JAMES MAGILL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I would now like to award the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Jim Magill, the former VFW Director of Employment Services at our Washington Office.

Jim was a Navy Corpsman who served on the ground in Vietnam with the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines. After his discharge in 1971, he became a congressional staffer until the Washington Officer hired him away in 1981.

Jim retired last September with more than 24 years of service to the VFW, moving through the ranks to become the Legislative Director before taking over the employment directorship.

He and his wife, Jan, now reside in their dream home they built by a lake in Maryland. Please welcome Jim Magill. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to James N. Magill.

"In sincere appreciation and recognition of nearly 25 years of loyal service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars as a dedicated employee serving in the VFW Washington Office as Special Assistant Director in the Legislative Office, Assistant Director and Director of Legislative Service, and Director, VFW Employment Service.

"His many years of advocating on behalf of our nation's veterans has earned our grateful admiration and respect, and is in keeping with the highest traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 30th day of August, 2006."

Signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner"

Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – COMRADE JIM MAGILL

COMRADE JIM MAGILL: Thank you, Chief, and “Gunner”. I attended my first national convention in 1982, and I can remember sitting out in the audience and watching folks who had just retired come up and receive this award. The only thing I could think of is, my gosh, it is going to be forever until I can get up there and hopefully I can get up there and receive the award.

IT seemed like that was a lifetime away, but these past 24 years have gone by so fast it is hardly even a belief that it has been that long. Looking back, I cannot think of a more honorable profession than working for one of the nation’s veterans organizations and being a member of the most respected veterans organization in the world.

I have always been and always will continue to be very proud of having had the opportunity to be a part of the VFW team. These past 24 years have given me more than just a tremendous sense of pride. It has given me the opportunity to know and work with you. I was thinking just a couple of days ago how many jobs can you have that you can go to any state or country, for that matter, and know that you can have a friend if you need one that is very, very close.

In closing, I want to thank you for inviting my wife, Jan, and me to join you at this convention and to receive this much-appreciated award. It means very much to both of us. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Jim, thank you for your many years of service.

Comrades, at this time would you please rise and help me welcome the President of the Ladies Auxiliary, National President Sandy Germany and her guests. (Applause)

LADIES AUXILIARY NATIONAL PRESIDENT SANDY GERMANY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I am extremely pleased that here to visit our convention today is a lady that I was proud to serve with during the past year.

Sandy has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary for many years and has left a successful legacy for others to follow for years to come. I admire her deeply. Please welcome a great lady from the great state of Alabama, Sandy Germany, President of the Ladies Auxiliary. (Applause)

RESPONSE – LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT SANDY GERMANY

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GERMANY: Commander-in-Chief Mueller, National Officers and VFW Members:

It is a privilege for me to be with you this morning and have this opportunity to greet you one more time. As the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this will be my last opportunity. Monday at the Joint Opening Session I mentioned what a remarkable experience this year has been serving with Commander-

in-Chief Jim and all of you certainly have helped that be true.

Today, I want to thank each and every one of you who played any role in making my visits so enjoyable. If you weren't there, you missed something. I appreciate what you did for me and what you do for the members of the Ladies Auxiliary every day on a regular basis. Our 92nd year partnership has made it possible to provide outstanding service to veterans, their families and our communities all across America.

This year the Ladies Auxiliary raised \$284,723 for Operation Uplink. Through these endeavors, it helped to make sure that those serving in harm's way had the opportunity to talk with their loved ones when the need arises, which is on an almost every-day basis. Like you, we know the importance of keeping families connected and we are proud to join with you in this endeavor. It is our cooperation with each other on all the projects that we conduct together each year that makes the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary the wonderfully great organization that it is.

My special thanks to any of you who have signed up members for the Ladies Auxiliary during this year. We appreciate it and I hope that you will continue to recruit for us. The members of the Ladies Auxiliary are very proud of our legacy of service and look forward to many more years working together for veterans and for America.

I particularly want to thank you, Jim. It has been an honor to serve with you. I read the speech and you-all know I don't read speeches. I can lay it to the side and talk to you now. I have enjoyed meeting every one of you in some way in some place, where a different time. Jim has led the Veterans of Foreign Wars to great heights.

You have got two wonderful gentlemen here who are going to lead it to greater heights in years of succession, but they can't do it by themselves. It takes each and every one of you standing by his side to get it done. As we accepted the obligation when we joined our organizations, we promised to never forget the ones who made the ultimate sacrifices, the ones who came home not whole, the ones who didn't come home, the ones who came home with stories to tell.

You have an outstanding group of leaders, but they merely hold titles. They can never stand alone. As I told the ladies, I merely hold the title of National President. Without each and every one of them, I could never have done my job. When an individual sets themselves up on a pedestal to think that they can do the job alone, that is when you will see programs fail, membership fail and things begin to go downhill.

So, if you have accepted the title of Commander of your Department, or any other title that you have accepted, please remember you are a member first with an obligation to the veterans and their families, and to this United States. Each one of you will always hold a special place in my heart. I am just going away for a little while, but I will be seeing you along the way somewhere.

To each one of you, thank you for your love, your devotion and for your friendship. I love you all very much. (Applause) Jim, you know when we went into office, I have been in office longer than him, but when we joined together three years ago I gave you a gift them. I gave you an eagle tie tack. On the cruise, I took it back. He called me an Indian giver.

At this point in time, I would like to present him with this gift, a gift of admiration, devotion and respect for all you stand for.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It has a beautiful diamond in the claws of the eagle. Thank you, Sandy. (Applause)

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GERMANY: When I gave him the eagle three years ago, I wished him much success soaring to greater heights. Now, in the claws of the eagle is the gold, the diamond, and he reached it. Thank you for him and also being there.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Sandy, I have a personal love gift from the VFW to present to you. This is yours.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GERMANY: Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Serving as Commander-in-Chief has been beyond my wildest dreams. I have had the opportunity to serve with a great lady, one who loves veterans, loves freedom, who loves meeting people, someone who has done her job as National President of the Ladies Auxiliary. Her theme this year "From Sea to Shining Sea – Freedom is Not Free," I thank you for giving Sandy and I the opportunity to see firsthand how true that is.

In our travels going overseas to the DMZ, to go in the hospitals at Bethesda and Walter Reed, to go to Landstuhl and visit with our soldiers, to travel into and visit the poly-trauma centers where a lot of our traumatic brain injury soldiers are treated, and see the awful damage that is done, we see firsthand that freedom is not free, and there is double price paid for that.

I personally want to thank two lovely ladies for putting up with me these past three years. To my wife, Pat, thanks for being there, for being patient, for caring, for being forgiving when I have not been patient, for your love and support, for saying things when I shouldn't, and you have reminded me of that.

I remember asking you, when I was thinking about running for this office, you told me you would support me as long as you didn't have to get involved. Well, I guess I lied a little bit. Thanks for sticking with me, Pat. I love you very much.

Now, this other lovely lady what a pleasure it has been serving with you, Sandy. I have come to love your wit and admire you for the love that you have for telling it like it is, for your loving and caring ways for our veterans and our men and women serving in the military. Thanks for being so gracious and making it so comfortable to be around you.

Your friendship has meant so much to Pat and I. I will treasure it with many other wonderful memories these past three years. I thank you and your Ladies Auxiliary for the many courtesies that you have extended to Pat and I in our travels. God bless you, and I wish you the best and I look forward, Pat and I, to become personal friends and travel and visit with you.

I would also like to acknowledge Celia Davis. She will be retiring. I want to thank her for the service that she has offered also to the Ladies Auxiliary, her service to our veterans and their families. Celia, thank you so very much.

It is not on the agenda today, but if you will allow me, I would ask my wife, Pat, to come to the microphone to say a few words.

MRS. PAT MUELLER: Hello. It has been great being Jim's wife and traveling with him, and I am very proud of him. He is a great guy. I thank everyone for their hospitality. Everybody made us feel so at home anywhere we went. All over the world, people were all the same. They are just great and they make you feel welcome.

It was fun to learn about different cultures and to see other parts of the world I never would have got to see otherwise. We thank all of you. Also, we thank you for all your hard work that you do in the Ladies Auxiliary. My eyes were opened this year for some reason.

I have seen how dedicated everyone was, and it is just great. There is no better organization. I am proud to be a member also. So, thank you for everything. (Applause)

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GERMANY: I would like to take a point of personal privilege. Would the Department of Alabama please stand? I would like to thank you for your years of dedication. I love you and I am coming home. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, Sandy. I wish you much success in your meeting. Comrades, will you join me in giving a big hand to the Ladies Auxiliary for all they do for our veterans. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO NANCY POMEROY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I now want to award the VFW Gold Medal of Merit and Citation to Nancy Pomeroy, the former Executive Assistant to the Executive Director of the VFW Washington Office.

Nancy was a young college student from West Virginia when she began working for the forerunner of our National Veterans Service.

She was soon elevated to the front office where, until her retirement, she would work for Executive Directors Cooper Holt, Larry Rivers, Bob Currie, Ken Steadman and Bob Wallace.

Nancy retired in February of this year after working for the VFW for almost 45 years. Her tenure is the second longest in VFW history. This is not in the script, but Nancy's loyalty to this organization goes back beyond working at the Washington office.

Nancy's brother served in Korea and was killed in that action. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously. He also had a Navy Destroyer named after him, the USS Pomeroy. Please welcome Nancy Pomeroy. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Gold Medal of Merit and this Citation awarded to Nancy Pomeroy.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of nearly 45 years of exceptional and devoted service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars as a dedicated employee, first fulfilling a position in the National Rehabilitative Service Office and ending her long and distinguished career as the Executive Assistant for the Executive Directors of the Washington Office.

"Her limitless enthusiasm and dedication, coupled with the professionalism of which she performed her duties for so many years, are in the finest traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 30th day of August, 2006."

It has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General

RESPONSE – MS. NANCY POMEROY

MS. NANCY POMEROY: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief Mueller. My thanks also to the Senior and Junior Vice Commanders-in-Chief and the Adjutant General. Of course, I must thank the four Past Commanders-in-Chief I worked with during my employment at the VFW in Washington, D.C. It was both an honor and a privilege working with each of them during these most fulfilling year of my life.

I am proud to say my first job was the one and only job of my entire career. I knew who my bosses were, but I also knew I wasn't just working for them. I was also working for the nation's veterans just as they were.

During my years of employment there, there have been many dedicated individuals who inspired me along the way, from national officers all the way down to my co-workers in the Washington and Kansas City Offices. I was there during the terms of 46 great VFW Commanders-in-Chief, but I must say that my greatest inspiration came from the heroic deeds of my brother, Ralph, who was killed in Korea at the age of 22.

I know my parents were still grieving, but also extremely proud of their son when his Medal of Honor was presented to them posthumously. One of the first things I learned about the VFW was its motto inscribed on the lobby wall of the Washington Office, "To Honor the Dead by Helping the Living."

Over the years, I realized this was what I wanted to do during my lifetime, to strive to honor not only my brother but all those who served in the military. I personally want to thank those of you present here today for your commitment, dedication and service to America.

It is really hard to believe that this is my 42nd VFW National Convention. At the first, I was assigned to work in the Distinguished Guests Headquarters as a member of the Washington Office staff. Well, things sure have changed. I am amazed that this year I am recognized as one of your distinguished guests.

There have been memorable experiences during my VFW employment, including the privilege of meeting many top government and military officials, and a host of national celebrities. Even during the final months prior to my retirement, Bob Wallace arranged for me to meet and have my picture taken with President George W. Bush.

Yes, I can say working for the VFW has been an incredible and rewarding journey, and one I shall never forget. The presentation of this award today is one of the greatest honors I have had in my lifetime. However, it is surpassed only by an event in 2001 when I was the maid of honor at the christening of the USS Pomeroy, a ship the United States had built and named in honor of my brother, Ralph.

Again, my sincere thanks to each of you and may the VFW continue to be the shining light for our nation's veterans. God bless you and may God continue to bless the VFW and the good old USA. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: The chair recognizes Past Commander-in-Chief Cooper T. Holt.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOLT: Thank you, Commander, for giving me this opportunity. I really wanted to read a letter that I wrote to Nancy upon her retirement. I thought you might enjoy it, and I know the staff in the Washington Office would enjoy it.

I said, "Dear Nancy: Forty-four successful years in a position of great responsibility is an accomplishment to be proud of and one few people can ever match. I am happy that you have chosen to retire and I want to add my word of congratulations on your splendid record of service to our VFW, to our nation's veterans, and on one more personal note, to me.

"Because of our 26 years together, I know better than anyone that no person, man or woman, deserves this time to retire and relax more than you. Additionally, I know that nobody else, upon retiring from our VFW, ever took with them the good wishes of a large group of friends and associates. No words of mine could pay a finer tribute than the record of achievement that you have made during your 44 years of service.

"Your service truly has been a service well over and far beyond the call of duty. Personally, I know that you were a valuable asset to me during my 26 years as the Executive Director of our Washington Office, and have been of equal or greater value to those that have followed me. You were a person that I relied on every day, and you never let me down. Simple words could never do justice for all that you have done for the VFW. However, Betty and I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you upon your splendid service, and sincere wish for you with God's assistance many more years of good health and happiness.

"Sincerely yours, Cooper T." Thank you very much and thank you, Chief. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION
TO AUSTIN SMITH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Now I would like to present the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Austin Smith, the former Washington Regional Office Supervisor and Appeals Consultant at the Board of Veterans Appeals.

Austin served two tours in Vietnam, first as a mortar man with the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, and then as a gunner for Riverine Operations.

Austin retired in May after serving the VFW and literally thousands of America's veterans for the past 30 years. He and his wife, Kathleen, reside in Maryland where he remains active as a grandfather and in his Post. He is also a former All-American Commander for the Department of the District of Columbia. Please welcome Austin Smith. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to Austin Smith.

"In sincere and grateful recognition of 30 years of exceptional and devoted service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in the VFW Washington Office National Veterans Service Department. As a dedicated employee, he has successfully and skillfully worked as the Special Assistant to the Director, Appeals Consultant for the Board of Veterans Appeals and the Regional Office Supervisor. Most importantly, he helped develop the National Veterans Service Training Program for New Personnel.

"His commitment to the objectives of the VFW, along with the professionalism and integrity with which he performed his duties, is in keeping with the finest traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 30th day of August, 2006."

This has been signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – COMRADE AUSTIN SMITH

COMRADE AUSTIN SMITH: Thank you very much for those very kind words. I love the VFW. The VFW has been very kind to both me and my family throughout the years, and I will never forget that. As a young man coming out of the military, my father and my cousins, all members of the VFW, said you have got to join the organization. "The Veterans of Foreign Wars is a good organization. They have a network of service officers that will be more than glad to assist you in any claims for the injuries that you sustained in service and for education benefits."

Since a good many of my family members were police and firemen, due to bumps and bruises I had picked up during my military career, those paths were kind of closed off to me, so I went back to school, and the VFW did, in fact, help me out immensely. Then I felt a debt of gratitude and felt I had to repay that in some way.

So, I kind of got involved with the Post in assisting veterans in college and in the neighborhood, the area, getting them down to our service officers to initiate their claims, getting them down to the medical center for any treatment that they required. It was all going pretty good and a lot of people were saying, you know, "Austin, you should go into that field. This is you. You are suited for that." I said, "No, it is just something I like doing."

Like I said, with the injuries I wasn't going to be in the police or fire department, and I didn't know truly what I was going to do. But I continued along the path while in college of assisting people and helping people out. The Director of National Veterans Service at the time, Bob Ashworth, called me up and said, "Austin, I would like you to play in a training film, a movie." I said, "Yeah?"

He said, "Since you have been in Vietnam, you were injured, you have gone through the schooling, you have got a pretty good grip and you would be good to sit down as a veteran in this training film, because you would do real well with that." Well, I was a little antsy, a little scared, actually. How was I going to say no? I said, "Well, sure, Bob."

Well, shortly thereafter he called me up and said, "Austin, I have some bad news for you." I said, "Oh?" He said, "That training film, we are going to do it somewhere else and we are not going to be able to use that." I went, "Wow, thank God."

Well, shortly after I graduated or on or about the day I was graduating, I received a call. It was Bob Ashworth. He said, "Austin, I have an opportunity for you here. I would like you to come down and meet with me and Cooper," – Cooper Holt was the Executive Director at the time – "for an interview." I said, "Well, sure."

I came down and met with both of them. They looked over my resume and said, "Why not? You are hired." So I said, "Fine." So I jumped right into the fray there and things couldn't have worked out any better for me. There was no more rewarding or noble cause than that of a VFW service officer. I enjoyed that.

Although there were other opportunities, they were not for me, they

were fine professions, with family and friends in them, but for me personally that service officer job, that was a fit for me. Many times you get feedback as to what you have done. A lot of times you don't get feedback as to what you have accomplished when you are working with veterans and their dependents.

But in one particular instance, I had gotten some feedback from somewhere I didn't expect it. All my family are veterans, and one of my younger sisters was at the VA Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and she was in the snack bar. She heard these two elderly ladies talking. One said, "I don't know what we could have done without Austin Smith. We would have lost everything."

My sister said, "Excuse me. I am not trying to jump in on your conversation, but Austin is my brother." They said, "Well, he did a great deal for us." I felt great about that. I mean, I felt like I made a difference. That's what it is all about, making a difference in somebody's life. There is no greater feeling than that.

In addition to my work with the National Veterans Service, as has been spelled out by John, I also was given an opportunity to become politically active. Of course, working for the National Service at the time, I didn't feel comfortable maybe getting politically involved. I wanted to make sure that was quite all right before I moved on that, and I met with Cooper Holt, and Cooper Holt said, "No, Austin, I think that would be good for you. It would be a good experience for you. You have got the support if you want to go forward with that."

I did, and Kansas City said anything we can do to assist you, help you in any way in that endeavor, we would be more than glad to do that. They did. That was rewarding. I made a lot of good friends that I have to this day. It was just so many good things that I can say about my career with the VFW. But it is not over.

A lot of jobs you retire and walk away and you don't see those people that you worked with throughout the years. But being a Past Department Commander in the VFW, I won't lose touch because I will still be involved with the organization, still having an opportunity to spend time with my very good friends that have been very good to me throughout the years.

As they say in the police department shows and fire department shows, they will do a toast and they will say, "Here is to the guy that invented this job." Thank you very much, folks.

PRESENTATION OF THE 2006 VFW AVIATION AND SPACE AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: America's determined effort to conquer the mystery and wonder of space has spawned a new age of technology and science. And like countless generations of explorers who came before, the ability to escape the bounds of earth has captivated and sparked the imagination of mankind.

The Tier One Private Manned Space Program personifies the human endeavor: to discover, to learn and to advance.

Here to accept the 2006 VFW Aviation and Space Award is Michael W. Melvill, Vice-President, General Manager and Pilot of Tier One.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Aviation and Space Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Tier One Private Manned Space Program.

"In special recognition of the unique and hopeful developments in space flight created by the successful flights of SpaceShipOne, the first successful private space program and the subsequent founding Virgin Galactic that is setting the stage for future private space flight. The continued success of Tier One's Private Space Flight Program will break down the barriers to public access to space. This is a testament to engineering innovation and daring entrepreneurship that exemplifies the American spirit and is in keeping with the finest traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 30th day of August, 2006. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

It is signed by James R. Mueller, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

This citation comes with a \$5,000 honorarium, which they are donating to Flight 56 Scholarship Fund.

RESPONSE – MR. MIKE MELVILL

MR. MIKE MELVILL: Thank you so much. Boy, this is really a great honor for me. But I want you all to know that up until we did this thing, only governments of the world had the resources and the power to take somebody out of the bounds of the earth and put them into the black of space. Now, our small company in Mojave, California, has gone and done that as well.

I would like to thank the team, mainly Bert Rutan, who is my boss and one of my best friends. He designed the airplane, he conceived the idea, and he picked me to be the pilot on the first time it went out of the atmosphere. You need to realize that if it wasn't for guys like you and those who have gone before, we wouldn't have the freedom in the United States to do something like this.

You could not do what we just did in any other country, because the government regulations and because of the way their countries are run, there is not the freedom available that you people have guaranteed for everybody who lives here, that we have the freedom to do whatever it is that we want to do. When we stated we were going to go and fly an airplane out of the atmosphere into space, we ran into a little bureaucracy problem here with the FAA and other people.

But they realized that the rules of this country are to provide freedom to the people who live here. Using that freedom, we designed, we built and we flew three different times out of the atmosphere into space. I was lucky enough to be the pilot on two of those flights. A brief description of that, you know, the rush of turning on that rocket motor and feeling three G's of acceleration on your back and flying the airplane yourself, this is not an airplane that you fly by a wire or controlled by a computer, it is flown by the pilot using stick and rudder just like he would if he was flying a light plane.

You have to turn it, point it up and accelerate to Mach 3.4, and go out of the atmosphere and watch a blue sky turn to a black sky, and experience about five minutes of weightlessness, things in the cabin floating around. You can turn the aircraft over and look down on the earth, and look down on the United States.

You have a visibility from 67 miles of more than 1,000 miles. From your eyeball to the horizon, I could see more than 1,000 miles. I could see all the way to Seattle, all the way down into Mexico, and I could see across the blue of the Pacific. It was the most amazing experience I have ever had in my life, and I want to thank you guys for providing the freedoms and guaranteeing the United States of America is the greatest place on earth to live. Thank you very much. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, as you know, the MOU was signed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and the United States Army Reserve. A comrade from Illinois requested that all of this be published so that all of the members understand exactly what was signed here this morning.

So, for the good of the order, the MOU will be published in the VFW Magazine, in the VFW Checkpoint, in the VFW Headquarters Bulletin, and a letter will be sent to all the Department Commanders and all the Department Adjutant-Quartermasters for publication in your newspapers concerning exactly what the MOU signed this morning by your Commander-in-Chief and the United States Army Reserve is all about. Thank you, comrades.

INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is now my distinct honor and privilege to introduce the Past Commanders-in-Chief. As I call their names, will you please give them a warm round of applause.

Cooper T. Holt	-	'56-57
Ray R. Soden	-	'73-74
John Stang	-	'74-75
Art Fellwock	-	'80-82
Bob Currieo	-	'82-83
Clifford G. Olson	-	'83-84
Norman G. Staab	-	'86-87
Larry W. Rivers	-	'88-89
Walter G. Hogan	-	'89-90
Robert E. Wallace	-	'91-92
John M. Carney	-	'92-93
George R. Cramer	-	'93-94
Allen "Gunner" Kent	-	'94-95
Paul Spera	-	'95-96
James E. Nier	-	'96-97
John E. Moon	-	'97-98
Thomas A. Pouliot	-	'98-99
John W. Smart	-	'99-2000
John F. Gwizdak	-	2000-2001
James N. Goldsmith	-	2001-2002
John Furgess	-	2004-2005

What a great leadership these fine comrades have provided to this organization. I look forward, hopefully, to joining you very shortly.

I will now call upon Past Commander-in-Chief Art Fellwock for a pre-

sentation.

VFW POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ART FELLWOCK: Thank you very much. I would like to make this presentation on behalf of the Political Action Committee to an individual who in the early days of the PAC, and I am going back to 1979 because I recall it very well, because I was elected Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief in 1979.

The Political Action Committee was being formed, and there was a lot of legwork, a lot of Committee meetings, a lot of meetings with attorneys to make sure that when we set up this Political Action Committee it was set up correctly. The individual who carried that ball, who was the originator of the VFW having a PAC, was Cooper Holt.

Cooper Holt led the way in Washington. He went to these various different Committees, different other PACs so we copied ours after some of them, and we would be successful with our PAC. So, as the one, the originator, the individual who thought that the VFW should have a PAC then did all the legwork and all the substantial work that it took to build the PAC what it is today, the Political Action Committee would like to present to Cooper Holt this eagle.

Cooper, before I read what is on this inscription, let me tell you that this is a wounded eagle. This is a wounded eagle because in its flight over here, in the transportation, it got busted up here in the bottom. I have got it glued together down here with some tape to hold it together. Don't worry about it. We will get you a good eagle in the end. I want to read to you what it says here.

"Golden Eagle Award honors Cooper T. Holt for outstanding dedication to the VFW Political Action Committee in its inception to its present."

Cooper, we are proud of you. Thanks a lot.

RESPONSE – PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER HOLT

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOLT: Thank you, Art, for your kind remarks. I just have a few comments that I would like to make at this time. First of all, I want you to know that I appreciate the high honor that has been bestowed upon me this morning. It is an honor I shall always be grateful for. It will be placed in my family room just as soon as I get home, and it will stay there until the good Lord calls me home or sends me wherever he is going to send me.

Our PAC was actually born in about 1976. Eric Sandstrom was the Commander-in-Chief, Howard Vander Clute was the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Art Fellwock was the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, and the Adjutant General was Julian Dickenson. We had several occasions, at least our Washington Office did, to visit many Congressmen's offices, many Senators' offices, many people in the administration trying to get their attention regarding our veterans programs.

Very few of them were listening to us at that time. One President in particular, I won't call names because, you know, the VFW doesn't participate in politics, so I understand. Anyhow, one of them started cutting the

budget just as soon as he got in office. We tried to talk with him to no good. We went to his First Secretary of Veterans of Affairs, Max Cleland to help us out. His remark was to the service organizations, there were four of us in the room, he said, "If you guys think I am going to use my influence on the President to do something like this, you have got another thought coming."

Later on, we had a meeting with that President. Eric Sandstrom, myself and Max Cleland were there. I can remember very distinctly the President walked in to the Oval Office from another door. He barely accepted our resolutions. I don't think he ever looked at them, and he took 60 seconds to look at that book, if he looked at it at all, and walked out. That was 60 seconds.

So, at that time we discussed we have got to do something. We have got to do more than we are doing to get the attention of the Congress of the United States. The only answer, the only body that was getting anything from the Congress of the United States at that time were those that had a Political Action Committee.

I discussed it with those three chair officers I mentioned, and with Julian Dickenson. They said it would never pass in the VFW, but maybe we better try it. For two years we worked and we worked hard without the VFW contributing one dime toward it. We didn't ask anybody for any money. We just had to have a Political Action Committee in order to have the clout that those that really got the job done in Congress, those that had Political Action Committees. They got the attention.

So, we did. We went to the Departments, we went to all of our meetings and we talked about the Political Action Committee. God knows, if I heard it one time, I heard it a thousand times: "Oh, we are not a political organization. We have got no business getting in politics." Well, it wasn't much of an answer at that time to that comment, but I can remember a convention in 1979 when we finally persuaded you to adopt the PAC, to adopt a PAC.

I remember one Senator in that audience, he and I had more cuss fights than anybody in Washington, D.C. His name was Senator Alan Simpson. He heard the debate on that floor, and a lot of the debate centered around what I said just a moment ago, the VFW has got no business in politics. We are a veterans organization.

Well, I remember when he got up to talk and in his remarks he said this: "Fellows, let me tell you something. You are going to participate in the political process of this country or they are going to take you apart, and don't you ever forget it. You will take a part or you are going to be taken apart."

At that point, I believe, Commander, that is what brought about a Political Action Committee. I have been so happy and so proud to see the progress that has been made over those years. We have had several Executive Directors, including Bob Currieo, Jack Carney, Charlie Ball, Al Poteet, and they all added a little bit more.

But I am here to tell you this morning, at least in my opinion, Art Fello-wock and Sal Caprichio have done a magnificent job. They have given us the standard now where to their best ability they are going to be able to give you a group of Congressmen and Senators that will say to you in order to get the PAC endorsement from the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, that they are going to be right in there with us.

I think it will mean a great deal to you and I know it will mean a great deal to the veterans of this country. A PAC was needed. We got it. No other service organization had the guts to do it or even join us. Many of them criticized us and are still criticizing us.

I will tell you another thing. If you go into a Congressman's office today and you say I am here representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars and we have a Political Action Committee, he stands up straight and he listens to you. So, I know what it means and I am so proud of you for what you are doing. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I just want to add my personal congratulations, too, for all the work and determination to stick to it, to see that this has been accomplished. I thank you very much, and I think it has been a great part of our organization and an asset to it.

I will call upon the Adjutant General for remarks.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, anybody making nominations or seconding nominations today, please move up to the stage at this time.

For the VFW insurance drawing for Wednesday, August 30th, the \$1,000 winner is William F. Hustad, Post 10549 in Wisconsin. You will pick up your check at the insurance booth.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS OF THE NATIONAL BUDDY POPPY CONTEST

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I will now call upon Tom Kissell, Director of Buddy Poppy, to make the announcements.

COMRADE THOMAS KISELL: Once again, it gives me great pleasure to announce the winners by category in the National Buddy Poppy Display Contest at the 107th National Convention in Reno. Let me start off by offering my congratulations to each and every Post and the Ladies Auxiliary, who took the time to enter a display into this contest, and more importantly transport that display all the way out to Reno for everybody to view here at this wonderful convention.

Starting off with Category No. 1, Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign:

First Place – Scott Post No. 4183, Belleville, Illinois

Second Place – Safety Harbor Memorial Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 10093, Safety Harbor, Florida

Third Place – Nathan F. Lamar Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 5606, Kansas City, Missouri

Category 2 – Memorial or Inspirational Displays:

First Place – George A. Sutton Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 1831, De Soto, Missouri

Second Place – Ghery-Pullen-Reinheimer Post and Auxiliary No. 7862, Arcola, Illinois

Third Place – I.P. "Sarge" Bell Memorial Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 3377, Manchaca, Texas

Director's Award - Bruce Shorts Ladies Auxiliary No. 5958, Titusville, Pennsylvania

Honorable Award – William L. Lovett Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 10137, Bushnell, Florida

Honorable Award – Billeaud-Melvin Cormier Memorial Post and Ladies

Auxiliary No. 982, Duson, Louisiana

Category 3 – Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies:

First Place – Topaz Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 3630, Topaz Ranch, Nevada

Second Place – Cory-Dullum Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 10010, East Helena, Montana

Third Place – Victor H. Meliza Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 9401, Lake Havasu City, Arizona

Director's Award – Brookside Memorial Post No. 6173, Brookside, Alabama

Category 4 – Memorial or Inspirational Displays (Junior Girls Units/Sons of the VFW:

First Place – Clarence Hoyt Junior Girls No. 9217, Liberty, New York

Second Place – Bridgeport Junior Girls Unit No. 5079, Chicago, Illinois

Third Place – Essex Hollow Neck Memorial Junior Girls Unit No. 2621, Essex, Maryland

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Commander-in-Chief, I move that the proceedings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars 107th National Convention be submitted to the Speaker of the House for printing as a House document in accordance with Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 2, 1968, Title 44, United States Code, Section 1332.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Gary Kurpius, Post 9365, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We have a motion made and seconded. Anything on the question? All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The motion carried.

VFW NATIONAL HOME TRUSTEES NOMINATED

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The VFW National Home Trustees to be nominated at the 107th National Convention:

Seventh National Home District, Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin:

Gerry Anger, VFW Post No. 2879, Wisconsin.

James N. Goldsmith, VFW Post No. 5666, Michigan.

Cynthia C. Peto, Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post No. 2046, Michigan.

Eleventh National Home District consisting of Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Pacific Areas, Utah and Wyoming:

Zona Gregg, Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post No. 559, Alaska.

Eleanor Smith, Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post No. 10029, Alaska.

Kenny R. Vegoren, VFW Post No. 3917, Colorado.

Raymond L. Warren, VFW Post No. 2879, Kansas.

NOMINATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, we will now go into the Nomination of Officers. For the office of Commander-in-Chief, I call upon Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General and Past Commander-in-Chief, VFW Post 9972, Arizona.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Delegates to the 107th National Convention:

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce and nominate the next

Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The comrade I am about to nominate has served the National Organization in a very dedicated way as the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

He served in Vietnam from 1967 to '69, with the 514th Transportation Company, which provided convoy security in the North Central Highlands. Upon returning from Vietnam, he joined Post 1539 in Babbitt, Minnesota. In 1977, he was elected the Post Commander and achieved All-American status.

In 1983, he was elected District Commander and again received All-American status. He then moved to the Department of Alaska, where it was a little bit warmer, and served for over 19 years as the Department's Service Officer and 17 years as the Department Adjutant.

In 2001, he was elected Department Commander and again received the All-American status. Gary also belongs to the Military Order of the Cootie, American Legion, the Vietnam Veterans of America. He served two years on former Governor Tony Knowles' Veterans Commission, and was selected as the Vietnam Veteran of the Year by President Carter for St. Louis County, Minnesota.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to place the name of Gary Kurpius, from the great state of Alaska, for the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 2006-2007.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: For the purpose of a second, I call upon Mel Sheppard, Kantishna, Alaska.

COMRADE MEL SHEPPARD (Post 3836 – Alaska): Commander-in-Chief, I am Mel Sheppard, Commander of the Department of Alaska. I am extremely honored to second the nomination for Gary Kurpius as Commander-in-Chief for the year 2006-2007.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any further nominations? Any further nominations? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We will now go into nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. For the purpose of a nomination, I will call on Robert E. Wallace, Past Commander-in-Chief, VFW Post 1851 – New Jersey.

NOMINATION OF SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALLACE: Thank you. Commander-in-Chief Mueller, National Officers, Past Commanders-in-Chief, my Fellow Delegates to the 107th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States:

I am both pleased and deeply honored to stand before you today representing my Garden State of New Jersey and the Great Eastern States Conference to place in nomination our candidate for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the year 2006-2007.

This past year has been one of change in the manner in which our Veterans of Foreign Wars operates, especially in our Kansas City Office.

Tough decisions were made, politics were put aside and the best interests of you, the members of this great organization, were in the minds of our

National Officers as they made the decisions for change.

They realize that not everyone agreed with all of the changes made, but they did know that in order to meet the ever-evolving requirements of our present and potential future members, change to our organizational structure was essential and will continue to be needed in the future.

We are a nation at war and will be so for many years because of the enemy we face. Their highest calling is to kill freedom-loving people, people who can worship as they wish, speak freely without worry of being jailed, people ruled by law not by fear of terrorists. Our enemy hates us and will do anything and everything to rid the world of Americans.

At the same time we were at war this past year, we witnessed horrific natural disasters that affected states in the South, especially Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, as well as impacting the VFW membership in those states.

These unprecedented challenges for our organization and our nation require quality leadership from organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Leadership not afraid to take a stand.

Leadership that strongly and vocally supports our troops, their families and their mission.

Leadership not afraid to speak out on unpopular issues.

Leadership not afraid to put politics aside and do what is right for our organization.

Leadership that is displayed by example and not afraid to get their hands dirty.

Leadership that makes you proud that you are a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Last year I told you that our candidate possessed these qualities and that he would be a team player and he would "Seize the Moment" along with the other National Officers and turn the challenges we face into opportunities. I believe he has truly done so and I am sure that those of you that have had the opportunity to meet and work with him will agree with me.

He is an honorable, articulate spokesperson for our great organization who leads by example.

I have witnessed him as we discussed veterans and national security issues with the President of the United States, high ranking U.S. Government officials and foreign leaders, and I can honestly say he has made me proud of his knowledge and style.

This is why we of the Eastern States Conference are so proud of our candidate for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

He is a man who will work side by side with Commander-in-Chief Gary Kurpius and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Glen Gardner, and he will continue to "Seize the Moment" for our VFW.

He joined the VFW in 1971 and is a Life Member of Star Landing VFW Post No. 2314 in Carteret, New Jersey.

He served four terms as Post Commander; he is a Past District Commander and a Past All-American State Commander.

He also served for many years as New Jersey Membership Director so he uniquely understands the issues you face on the local level.

A past member of the National Council of Administration, he has also served on the National Security, Legislative and POW/MIA Committees and Chaired all three.

He is married and he and his wife, Gloria, have one son, a daughter, a step-daughter and two grandchildren, and they reside in Carteret, New Jersey.

A Vietnam Veteran of the 4th Infantry Division, he is the recipient of the Bronze Star, Vietnam Service Ribbon, Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, National Defense Ribbon and the Good Conduct Medal.

He retired in 2002 after 33 years with the Union Carbide Corporation as a Site Services Coordinator. He now works for the State of New Jersey as an investigator for the Weights and Measures Division. He also served as a Real Estate Commissioner for the State of New Jersey.

Our candidate understands the issues we face as an organization, he understands the local issues, the Washington and the International issues, and he is able to speak out firmly with knowledge. He is truly someone we can all be proud of. In challenging times like this, we need leaders like him. I know he will "Seize the Moment" and work closely with Commander-in-Chief Kurpius, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Gardner and all of us to continue the changes necessary to move the VFW forward.

My fellow VFW delegates, family and friends, I am extremely proud and honored to place the name of George J. Lisicki, from the great state of New Jersey in nomination for the high office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for 2006-2007. We sincerely thank you for your support.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: For the purpose of a second, I call on Pierre Lamereaux, Past Commander, Department of New Jersey, VFW Post No. 2314.

COMRADE PIERRE LAMEREAUX (Post 2314 – New Jersey): Commander-in-Chief, Comrades, I am Pierre Lamereaux, a delegate from Post 2314, Carteret, New Jersey, George's Home Post. I am extremely proud to second the nomination for George J. Lisicki for the high office of National Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the year 2006-2007. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any further nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any further nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any further nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

We will now go into nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. For the purpose of a nomination, I call on James E. Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, VFW Post 8919, Texas.

NOMINATION OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Chief. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. National Officers, Convention Delegates, Past Commanders-in-Chief and Friends:

I don't have to tell you the importance of this segment of this great convention. Today we nominate for office and tomorrow we will elect to office those officers that will lead our National Organization during the 2006-2007 VFW year. I stand before you this morning to proudly place in nom-

ination the name of Glen Gardner, Jr., of Post 3359, in Garland, Texas, to be the next Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Elected as the Southern Conference candidate last November, and endorsed by the Eastern, Western and Big Ten Conferences at this convention, Glen is a proud U.S. Marine Corps veteran. He joined the VFW in 1969 upon his return from Vietnam.

I could stand here and recite all of his accomplishments, personal, professional and VFW, but he published a great brochure during his campaign in the Southern Conference for all to see. More importantly, most of you know him from his many years of attending and participation in deliberations at our National Conventions. But I do want to share a few very significant things that will tell you about Glen and point out why he is the man for this job.

At every juncture, Glen has led the way and rallied his fellow comrades around him to get things done. At the grassroots level, he earned his Life Membership by working at his Post for one dollar an hour. His job transferred him to the Garland, Texas, Post from Kansas in 1975.

Two short years later, as a direct result of Glen's efforts as Post Quartermaster, VFW Post 3359 moved into a new 7,600-square foot Post home. It is still there and it is paid for. Comrades, this is perseverance, that is leadership at an early juncture in his VFW life.

He served on the National By-Laws Committee for 19 years. Why? Because of his knowledge of the organization and what is best for its continued progress and, most importantly, his desire to look out for the grassroots members. When I was Commander-in-Chief, I appointed Glen my Budget and Finance Chairman. Not many Past Chiefs can say they appointed their Department Adjutant-Quartermaster as Budget Chairman.

Once again, Glen's hands-on knowledge and an understanding of the national budget process made it an easy choice for me. Comrades, our VFW is a business. It is a big business. Glen has proven to be a leader at every level of this organization and outside the organization when it comes to veterans' issues.

I have known Glen for 30 years as many of you. Some of you have known him longer. We all know him as an up-front, tell-it-like-it-is leader, who is a hands-on, forward-thinking individual that many in this room have turned to for guidance in your own Department.

Just look at how Glen stepped forward in his conference alone. He has over the years consistently led the way and spearheaded the efforts for golf tournaments, the Conference Joint Reception, and now at this convention the first All-Conference Reception; publication of the Conference Roster, making conference shirts available, and serving on many Conference Committees.

He didn't have to do those things. He volunteered and led the way. People came to expect him to do it. Again, his leadership style, enthusiasm and unrelenting tenacity to get things done, that's what he will do in the VFW National Chairs. He will always do things that need to be done to make things better for all concerned, but especially for those of the grassroots level of our great organization.

That's what he has done in Texas. He has been Adjutant Quartermas-

ter for 25 years, managing the day-to-day operations of a Department of 100,000 members, plus or minus a few over the years. This is a Department with a \$1.5 million budget and investments of over \$3 million. And, again, outside of his VFW responsibilities, he chaired the Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations for many years. That is 600,000 members strong.

He is a member of the Texas Veterans State Cemetery Committee, and he gets it done for the veterans during the Texas legislative sessions. He sits on many Boards and led the fight in Texas to exempt Post homes from property tax and to construct veterans' homes.

Glen is not only known in the Southern Conference, but around this great nation. That's why he brings so much to this candidacy. He has earned the respect necessary to assume the leadership of our organization. I could go on and on about Glen's abilities, his genuine concern for the troops, his in-depth knowledge of the Veterans of Foreign Wars at all levels, and his willingness and desire and genuine concern to keep us going in the right direction as we move more and more into the 21st Century.

But let me just say proven leadership does count. That's what we need now during these critical times. You know, I know that Glen Gardner has been a leader since he joined the VFW, 37 years of proven leadership. He is eminently qualified for the job and recognizes that leaders of organizations are only successful because of the help and support received from the membership. He will never forget that you are the strength of the VFW.

Once again, I consider it a very high honor and distinct privilege to have the opportunity to place in nomination the name of Glen Gardner, Jr., for the position of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, 2006-2007. He can and he will make a difference. He will make us proud, and I respectfully request tomorrow that you cast your vote for and elect this outstanding comrade to this high office. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: For the purpose of a second, I will call on the following individuals.

W. Benny Bachand, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Florida. Travis E. Whaley, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Alabama. James F. Gilbert, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Arkansas.

Albert R. Spears, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Georgia. James MacDonald, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Kentucky. Precilla Wilkewitz, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Louisiana. Johnnie L. Richard, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Mississippi.

Michael Edwards, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of North Carolina. Al Spencer, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of South Carolina. Ronnie L. Davis, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Tennessee.

Kim Deshano, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Virginia. Donald L. Young, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of West Virginia.

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND (Department of Florida): Thank you. Glen, I guess this is the only way I am going to get to the microphone at this convention. Commander-in-Chief and Delegates to the 107th National Convention, I stand before you to second the nomination of Glen Gardner as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

As the Department's Adjutant-Quartermaster of Florida, I have been asked to represent all the Department Adjutant-Quartermasters of the great

Southern Conference that are standing behind me. As the Department Adjutant-Quartermaster of Texas for over 25 years, Glen has always performed his duties with distinction and dedication.

Glen has always been willing and able to share his ideas and experience with other AQs, not only in the Southern Conference but throughout the nation, to mentor them, to assist them in the performance of their duties. Being a Department Adjutant-Quartermaster brings a unique perspective to the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

His knowledge of the by-laws, financial management and day-to-day operations and challenges of a large Department not only qualify him for the office but give him an advantage today of being able to take on this huge responsibility.

On a personal note, I have worked with and enjoyed Glen's friendship for over 25 years. I know him to be a person of integrity and honesty. He has always had the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Department of Texas first and foremost in his actions and in his deeds.

I can assure you that tomorrow you will be electing an outstanding individual for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, and he will make a great Commander-in-Chief in two years. I am proud as well as all of those behind me in seconding the nomination of Glen Gardner of the Southern Conference from the great state of Texas as the next Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any further nominations for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any further nominations for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any further nominations for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? The nominations will now stand in recess until tomorrow morning.

I now call for nominations for the office of Quartermaster General. For the purpose of a nomination, I would like to call to the mike Robert Weiss, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Michigan; Dave Havely, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Louisiana; Stan King, Quartermaster, Department of Massachusetts; Precilla Wilkewitz, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Louisiana; and Larry Longfellow, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Montana.

NOMINATION OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

COMRADE ROBERT WEISS (Department of Michigan): Commander-in-Chief Mueller, National Officers and Delegates to this 107th Convention: Lawrence Maher was elected Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in March, 2005. Prior to his selection, Maher served as Assistant Quartermaster General from 1995 to 2005, and legal counsel to the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Headquarters since 1979.

Larry earned his eligibility in the Veterans of Foreign Wars by serving in the United States Navy. During his service, he received the National Achievement Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and Vietnam Campaign Medal.

After his release from active duty in March, 1972, Larry served in the United States Navy Reserve until retirement in 1992, earning the rank of

Commander.

Larry graduated magnum cum laude from Rockhurst University in Kansas City, in 1968, with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Relations. After his Vietnam service, Larry went to attend law school at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, earning his juris doctorate with distinction in 1975.

Larry is a member of the Missouri Bar, the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar, and the American Bar Association. He is a Life Member of VFW Post 7356, in Parkville, Missouri, and has served the VFW as Chairman of the National By-Laws Study Committee and as National Parliamentarian. Larry is married with three children, and resides at Weatherby Lake, Missouri.

It is my distinct honor and privilege to nominate Lawrence M. Maher for the high office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: For the purpose of a second, I call upon Dave Havelly, Adjutant-Quartermaster, Department of Indiana.

COMRADE DAVE HAVELEY (Department of Indiana): Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Comrades:

It gives me great privilege to second the nomination of Lawrence M. Maher for the office of Quartermaster General for the ensuing year. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any further nominations for Quartermaster General? Any further nominations for Quartermaster General? Any further nominations for Quartermaster General? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

I will now call for nominations for Judge Advocate General. For the purpose of a nomination, I call on Arthur "Russ" Richards, Commander of the Department of Texas, VFW Post No. 4010, Texas.

NOMINATION OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

COMRADE RUSS RICHARDS (Post 4010 – Texas): Commander-in-Chief, I am Russ Richards, a delegate from VFW Post 4010, Missouri City, Texas, and Commander of the Department of Texas.

It is with a great deal of pleasure and honor that I place in nomination for Judge Advocate General the name of Kenneth R. Burton, Jr., a Life Member of VFW Post 9182 in Katy, Texas. As a practicing attorney, Ken will do a great job representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars as our Judge Advocate General. We ask for your support of his candidacy. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: For the purpose of a second, I will call on Larry Rivers, Past Commander-in-Chief, VFW Post 1736, Department of Louisiana.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LARRY RIVERS: Good morning, my fellow delegates. I am Larry Rivers, a delegate from VFW Post 1736 in Alexandria, Louisiana. Having had the opportunity to serve in the office to which Ken now aspires, I am particularly honored to have this opportunity to second his nomination.

Ken is a practicing attorney and a Life Member of VFW Post 9182 in Katy, Texas. He joined the VFW in 1997 and since that time has been a very active VFW member. He has served as Post Commander and District Com-

mander in his native Texas. He is now in his fifth term as Judge Advocate for the Department of Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Ken served in the U.S. Army Reserve from 1965 to 1989, and he served in Korea with the 7th Infantry Division. During this last year, Ken as a representative of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, made a trip to Southeast Asia helping to establish libraries in Vietnam. He made a trip to Iraq, and upon his return put together the necessary funding and equipment to establish a wireless computer service for our troops in Iraq. This service will be put in place for the next rotation of troops.

While serving as Judge Advocate for the Department of Texas, Ken has always made himself available to help the Department and Posts throughout his state if and when they needed advice and counsel concerning legal matters.

Ken and his wife, Anna Leigh, who is a member of the Ladies Auxiliary, have three children and reside in Katy, Texas.

It is with a great deal of pleasure and pride that I second the nomination of Ken R. Burton, Jr., for the position of Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2006-2007 VFW year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Are there any further nominations for Judge Advocate General? Are there any further nominations for the office of Judge Advocate General? Any further nominations for the office of Judge Advocate General? Nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

For the office of Surgeon General, for the purpose of a nomination, I call upon Victor Fuentealba, Past Judge Advocate General, VFW Post 9083, Maryland.

NOMINATION OF SURGEON GENERAL

COMRADE VICTOR FUENTEALBA (Post 9083 – Maryland): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Comrades:

The candidate whose name I am about to place in nomination for the high office of Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 2006-2007, enlisted in the United States Navy in June, 1949 as a hospital corpsman. He was commissioned an Ensign in the Medical Service Corps in October, 1962.

For nine years, he served with the Marine Corps, including a year with the 3rd Medical Battalion, 3rd Marine Division in Vietnam. During his 40 years of service in the Navy, he has received numerous awards, including the Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy Commendation Medal with Combat V Device, the Combat Action Ribbon, National Defense, Good Conduct and Vietnam Service Medal with two stars and the Marine Corps Device.

He retired with the rank of Captain on August 1st, 1999. He joined VFW Post 10076 in Mt. Airy, Maryland, just prior to his retirement, and served in numerous offices, including Post Commander, District Quartermaster, District Commander, District Service Officer and Post Service Officer.

He was Department Surgeon in Maryland from 2003, and he continues to serve in that position. He is a Life Member of the American Legion, Am-Vets, and he is also a member of the Naval Institute, Military Officers Association, United States Naval FLeight Reserve Association and 3rd Marine

Division Association.

He is married with five children, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. His wife, Carolyn, is the newly-elected President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Department of Maryland.

Comrades, it is my distinct honor and privilege on behalf of the Department of Maryland and the Eastern States Conference to place in nomination the name of William "Bill" Self, a Life Member of Post 10076, for the high office of Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 2006-2007.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: For the purpose of a second, I call on Thomas V. Kimball, Jr., Commander of the Department of Maryland, VFW Post No. 10159.

COMRADE THOMAS KIMBALL (Post 10159 – Maryland): I am Tom Kimball, Post 10159, Salisbury, Maryland, serving as Department Commander. It is a great privilege to second the nomination of William "Bill" Self for Surgeon General. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Any further nominations for Surgeon General? Any further nominations for Surgeon General? Any further nominations for Surgeon General? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

We will now go into nominations for National Chaplain. For the purpose of a nomination, I will call upon Walter G. Hogan, Past Commander-in-Chief, VFW Post 6498, Wisconsin.

NOMINATION OF NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, other Distinguished Guests and Delegates to the 107th National Convention:

I am extremely honored to have the opportunity to present for your consideration our candidate for National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 2006-2007. Our candidate, Charlene Cobb, earned her service in the Persian Gulf aboard USS Stimmet, retiring in 1997 as a Chief Petty Officer.

Upon her return from serving in the Persian Gulf, she returned to the Badger State and became involved in Post 10173 in Delavan, Wisconsin. She has served that Post with distinction as a Post Commander, a Post Quartermaster, and on the District she has served as the District Chaplain since 2001. She is currently serving our state as the State Chaplain and has been in that capacity since 2003.

Having known Charlene for these past ten years, I can attest to her dedication and her love of God and her love of her country. For 40 years she has dedicated herself to the ministry in our state, and we are extremely proud of her service. She is a lay leader filling in for the pastor on numerous occasions.

Charlene is also active in her denomination, currently holding the position of moderator for the Commission on Congressional Ministries. The moderator of this Commission is a member of the Board of Missions and the Executive Committee for the Wisconsin Region of the American Baptist Churches.

In this capacity, she has a voice and vote on the activities and leader-

ship and direction of the Wisconsin Baptist Churches. She is a Sunday school teacher, a Bible study leader, along with being on the Evangelism and Missions Committee of her church. Charlene has just about completed her Master of Divinity with Central Theological Seminary.

I am extremely proud and honored to present for your consideration, our candidate for National Chaplain, Charlene Cobb, who has been endorsed by the Big Ten Conference, by the Western Conference, by the Eastern Conference and the Southern Conference, and we in Wisconsin are extremely proud of our candidate. I am proud to submit her name for nomination for National Chaplain for the year 2006-2007. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: For the purpose of a second, I will call upon Philip Jasinski, Commander for the Department of Wisconsin, VFW Post No. 2895.

COMRADE PHILIP JASINSKI (Post 2895 – Wisconsin): Commander-in-Chief and Comrades, it is indeed an honor for me to second the nomination for Charlene Cobb as National Chaplain for the year 2006-2007. She is an outstanding comrade and very religiously motivated. She will do an outstanding job as National Chaplain. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, Phil. Are there any further nominations for the office of National Chaplain? Any further nominations for the office of National Chaplain? Any further nominations for the office of National Chaplain? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

I will now call on the National Chaplain, Dean Derieg, to give the Benediction.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: Almighty God, continue your blessings upon the remaining events of this convention. Bless our troops and our nation. In our Lord's name we pray. Amen.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that concludes today's business session.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. This 107th VFW National Convention will stand in recess until 8:00 o'clock

tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 11:30 o'clock a.m.

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2006

(The Fourth Business Session of the 107th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Reno, Nevada, was called to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief James Mueller presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, Sisters and Guests: I call the 107th National Convention in session. Comrade Chaplain, will you please give the Opening Prayer.

OPENING PRAYER

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Dean Derieg gave the Opening Prayer at this time.)

SALUTE TO THE COLORS AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance was given.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, your order has been obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, thank you.

I would like to now call upon the Department Commander of Nevada for a presentation.

PRESENTATION BY COMRADE JOHN STROUD – NEVADA

COMRADE JOHN STROUD (Post 2313 – Nevada): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am John Stroud, State Commander of the Department of Nevada, Post No. 2313.

Commander-in-Chief and Delegates to the 107th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the hard-working volunteers from the Department of Nevada and its Ladies Auxiliary are extremely honored to have been your host for this convention. We hope you have had a wonderful time in Reno.

I wish to thank the generous bidders who made this year's silent auction such a success. It will be a very long time until my wife forgives me for not placing the winning bid on the Green Bay Packers, and I owe the State of Wisconsin for pointing that out to her, the Commander from Wisconsin.

We have chosen the VFW Foundation's Unmet Needs Program to be the recipient of the proceeds of this year's silent auction. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, it gives me great pleasure on behalf of the Department of

Nevada to present to you this check for \$5,246 for the Unmet Needs Program. Thank you for permitting me to be your host. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, John. I want to thank you and your Committee here in Nevada for an outstanding job that you have done to make the convention such a success. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I will now call upon the Adjutant General.

COMPLETION OF CONVENTION BUSINESS

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, all Council members present and elect, all Council members, please come forward to your seats in the front as you were instructed. All Council members come forward. Comrades, as of 1630 yesterday evening, no new Resolutions came to the Adjutant General's office.

So, according to the Convention Rules, no more Resolutions may be brought forth before this convention.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is now my pleasure to dismiss the Committee on General Resolutions. I want to thank them for all their efforts and for everything they have done.

I now call upon David Butters for a report of the Credentials Committee.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE DAVID BUTTERS (Post 475 – Delaware): As of the close of business yesterday, August 30, 2006, total delegate strength of this convention, Post delegates, 10,800. Department Commanders, 49. Total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 32. Total Officers, 38. That is for a grand total of 10,925.

Commander-in-Chief, this is my final Credentials Report for this 107th National Convention, and I want to say it has been a distinct pleasure serving you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Dave, thank and your Committee for all the hard work you have done.

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: If you will allow me, I would like to just take a moment to introduce my officers for this past year, 2005-2006.

Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Gary L. Kurpius.

Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, George J. Lisicki.

Adjutant General for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Allen "Gunner" Kent.

The Quartermaster General, Larry M. Maher.

Judge Advocate General (Richard F. Therrien is not here.)

Surgeon General, Linda J. Fairbank.

National Chaplain, Dean Derieg.

My National Chief of Staff, John L. Dahman.

Inspector General, Dan G. Petersen.

I would ask that all the National Council members that served this past

year please stand and be recognized. Thank you, comrades. (Applause)

I have just a few brief remarks. Just as any big organization, you need the support of all the officers and everyone needs to be on line if you are going to have success in that corporation. The VFW is a corporation. I express my thanks to my fellow officers, to all who have served this year. Thank you very much.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We will now go into the Election of Officers.

ELECTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: For the high office of Commander-in-Chief, any further nominations? Any further nominations?

I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MELVIN SHEPPARD (Department of Alaska): There being no further nominations, I would ask the Adjutant General to cast a unanimous ballot for Gary Kurpius as Commander-in-Chief for the ensuing year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I will call for a second.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: I will second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I will now call for a vote. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. It carried.

I will call on the Adjutant General.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Commander-in-Chief, by the power vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Gary Kurpius for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 2006-2007. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: My fellow comrades, I now call upon the Commander-in-Chief-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Gary Kurpius.

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT KURPIUS: Thank you, Chief. Thank you very much, comrades. Thank you for the confidence you have placed in me and the opportunity to lead the greatest veterans organization in the world. We have a lot of challenges facing us this next year, but with each and every one of your support and all the good comrades this week and the ones that couldn't make it here, the Veterans of Foreign Wars will hit the goals we have set.

I will keep my remarks short now and in my Acceptance Address I will have those goals. Once again, thank you so very, very much for all your support.

ELECTION OF SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I will now open nominations for National Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Any further nominations? Any further nominations? Any further nominations? Nominations will close.

COMRADE PIERRE LAMEREAUX (Post 2314 – New Jersey): I move that the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for George Lisicki as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

COMRADE FRANK MOORE (Department of New Jersey): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I will now call for the vote. All those in favor will signify by the sign of “aye”; those opposed. The motion carried.

I will now call on the Adjutant General to cast the vote.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: As Adjutant General, I cast one unanimous ballot for George Lisicki as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: My fellow comrades, I have the high honor and privilege to bring to the microphone Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect George Lisicki for his remarks.

REMARKS BY SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LISICKI: Thank you, Chief. Fellow comrades, thank you for the honor you bestowed on me this morning. You have given me the opportunity to serve as National Officer for the very best veterans organization in the world, the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I want to thank you, Commander-in-Chief, for your leadership this year. It was a privilege and an honor to serve as your Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Thank you for putting this organization on the right track in the future. I look forward to working with Gary Kurpius, and I extend to you my congratulations. I look forward to working on your team.

I know in the leadership of our Commander-in-Chief Gary Kurpius this organization will move forward and will make you proud.

Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect, Glen Gardner, I look forward to Glen joining us, the Kurpius-Lisicki-Gardner team. Thank you, Commander.

ELECTION OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We will now ask for nominations for National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Are there any other nominations for National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any further nominations for National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any further nominations for National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? The nominations are closed.

COMRADE JIMMY CANTRELL (Post 9168 – Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Jimmy Cantrell, a delegate from Post 9168, Texas. I would make a motion that nominations cease and you instruct the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for Glen Gardner, Jr., for National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the ensuing year. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Is there a second?

COMRADE RUSS RICHARDS (Post 4010- Texas): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The motion carried.

I now call on the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, by the power vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Glen Gardner for the high office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, I have the honor to call to the microphone for some remarks, the National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Glen Gardner.

REMARKS BY JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT GARDNER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. It finally gets to you. Thank you, comrades. I want to thank everyone who has placed their confidence in me as Junior Vice Commander to help me work with this organization over the next three years.

I look forward with anticipation serving this great organization. Comrades, I will assure you you have elected a Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief that will listen to your concerns and do anything we can do to make this a better organization. You have elected a Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief who will listen to your ideas and suggestions that we can do differently, or can do to better the organization.

Most of all, you have elected a Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief that will listen to your concerns and your ideas and take them to the other members of the leadership team so we can make this a better organization for the next 100 years. I stand ready, willing and able to work with our Commander-in-Chief Gary Kurpius and our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief George Lisicki, and the other members of this great team as we lead this great organization.

Thank you once again for everything that you do for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Once again thank you for everything you do for the veterans of this great nation. Thank you very much. (Applause)

ELECTION OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I now ask for nominations for the high office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Any further nominations? Any further nominations? Any further nominations?

COMRADE JESSIE JONES (Post 2657 – Missouri): I move the nominations cease for Quartermaster General and that a unanimous ballot be cast for Lawrence Maher as Quartermaster General.

COMRADE JERRY JONES (Post 1829 – Missouri): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: You have a motion that has been moved and seconded. I will now call for the vote. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The motion carried.

I will now call on the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for Quartermaster General Larry Maher.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Commander-in-Chief, by the power vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Larry Maher to the high office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, it gives me great pleasure and honor to introduce to the microphone for his remarks Quartermaster General-Elect Larry Maher. (Applause)

REMARKS BY QUARTERMASTER GENERAL-ELECT

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL-ELECT MAHER: It was great to hear the song of the Senior Naval Service, wasn't it? (Laughter) Comrades, Sisters and Special Guests:

Thank you for the trust that you have placed in me by electing me Quartermaster General. I promise you that I will not let you down. Also, I want to thank Commander-in-Chief Jim Mueller. I personally have never met a more conscientious and caring individual in my life, and I am deeply proud to call him my friend.

Everybody knows and recognizes his character, and some people may not have recognized he is a leader and how he can make tough decisions. I wasn't surprised at that. I think people will look back on this year as a watershed year in our organization thanks to Jim Mueller.

Gary Kurpius, I will enjoy working with you, George Lisicki and Glen Gardner. In passing three important by-law provisions at this convention concerning finances, the delegates, I think, have endorsed what we have been doing, but I think they have firmly placed the ball in our court as leaders of the organization to continue to run it in an efficient and effective manner. I think that working together we will continue to do that.

To the delegates, again thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Quartermaster General. If you have any questions, comments, complaints or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or contact people on my staff. We are here to serve you and to do everything we can to earn the trust that you have placed in us. Thank you very much. (Applause)

ELECTION OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I will now open nominations for Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Any further nominations? Any further nominations? Any further nominations for Judge Advocate General? The nominations are now closed.

COMRADE RUSS RICHARDS (Post 4010 – Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Russ Richards, a delegate from Post 4010, Missouri City, Texas, and Commander of the great state of Texas. I move the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for Kenneth Burton for Judge Advocate General for the 2006-2007 year.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 – Texas): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I will now call for the vote. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The motion carried.

I now call on the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous vote.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Commander-in-Chief, by the power and

authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous vote for Kenneth Burton for the high office of Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: My fellow delegates, it is a pleasure to call to the microphone for his remarks, the Judge Advocate General-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ken Burton.

REMARKS BY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL-ELECT

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL-ELECT BURTON: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I ran for one office and I ended up with two. I appreciate that. That is only one chair, I understand. This office has been filled by some very distinguished lawyers and they have the tradition of service to each and every one of them. I look forward to following in that tradition and hope to fill some shoes. Thank you. (Applause)

ELECTION OF SURGEON GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I will now open nominations for the high office of Veterans of Foreign Wars for Surgeon General. Any further nominations? Any further nominations? Any further nominations? The nominations are now closed.

COMRADE RICHARD UDOFF (Department of Maryland): Commander-in-Chief, I move that the Adjutant General cast one unanimous vote for William Self as Surgeon General. Thank you, sir.

COMRADE THOMAS KIMBALL (Post 3015 – Maryland): I second the motion for William Self.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We will now call for the vote. All those in favor will signify by the sign of “aye”; all those opposed. The motion carried.

I will now call on the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous vote.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Commander-in-Chief, by the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for William Self for the high office of Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: My fellow comrades, it is a pleasure to call to the microphone for his remarks Surgeon General-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, William Self.

REMARKS BY SURGEON GENERAL-ELECT

SURGEON GENERAL-ELECT SELF: Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Comrades:

I thank you for this honor you have given me. I am a firm believer in the principles and programs of the VFW and we should always put veterans first and honor the dead by helping the living as did our fathers when they met in the tailor shop in Columbus, Ohio, in 1899. Thank you. (Applause)

ELECTION OF NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I now open nominations for the

high office of National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Any further nominations? Any further nominations? Any further nominations for the high office of National Chaplain? Nominations are now closed.

COMRADE PHILIP JASINSKI (Post 2895 – Wisconsin): I am Phil Jasinski, a delegate from Post 2895, and State Commander of Wisconsin. I move that nominations for National Chaplain be closed and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for Charlene Cobb for National Chaplain.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER G. HOGAN (Post 6498 – Wisconsin): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Wally Hogan, Post No. 6498, Wisconsin, is proud to second that nomination.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I will now call for the vote. All those in favor will signify by the sign of “aye”; those opposed. The motion carried.

I will now call for the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous vote.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Commander-in-Chief, by the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Charlene Cobb for the high office of National Chaplain for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Thank you, sir. My fellow comrades, it gives me a great honor to call to the microphone the National Chaplain-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Charlene Cobb, for her remarks.

REMARKS BY NATIONAL CHAPLAIN-ELECT

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN-ELECT COBB: Good morning. It is a tremendous honor to stand before you as your National Chaplain. There is a story entitled “God Sent Me” that demonstrates the importance of being available when God calls. There was this United States Marine attending some college courses between the time that he completed missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, but one of the courses he was taking had a professor that was an avowed atheist and a member of the ACLU.

One day the professor shocked the class when he came in. He looked at the ceiling and flatly stated, “God, if you are real, then I want you to knock me off this platform. I will give you exactly 15 minutes.” The lecture room fell silent. You could hear a pin drop.

Ten minutes went by and the professor proclaimed, “Here I am, God. I am still waiting.” It got down to the last couple of minutes, when the Marine got out of his chair, went up to the professor and cold-cocked him, knocking him off the platform. The professor was out cold.

The Marine calmly went back to his seat and sat down. The other students were shocked and sat there in stunned silence. The professor eventually came to and was shaken and looked at the Marine and said, “What in the world is wrong with you? Why did you do that?”

The Marine calmly replied, “God is too busy today protecting America’s troops for defending your right to make stupid statements and act like an ignoramus, so he sent me.”

God sends us to fight for the right for all veterans. I am proud to be sent to you and stand and be one of those fighters as a member of the great-

est veterans organization in the world, the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We can do and make a commitment by our commitment and dedication to this organization. Thank you for your support. This is a serious responsibility, and I pledge to work tirelessly to promote the importance of faith in our lives. Thank you. (Applause)

PLACEMENT OF CAPS, PINS AND BADGES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I will now call upon the Adjutant General.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades and Guests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and our 107th National Convention: At this time we will have the placement of the caps on the newly-elected officers.

Gary E. Kurpius' cap will be placed on his head by his wife, Nancy. (Applause)

The Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief's hat will be presented by his lovely wife, Gloria. (Applause)

The Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief's cap will be presented by his wife, Jean. (Applause)

The Quartermaster General's hat will be presented to him by his lovely wife, Judy. (Applause)

The Judge Advocate will be presented his cap by his lovely wife, Anna Lee. (Applause)

The Surgeon General will be presented his hat by his lovely wife, Carolyn. (Applause)

The National Chaplain will be presented her cap by the present National Chaplain, Dean Derieg. (Applause)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS-ELECT

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The incoming Council members for the year 2006-2007 are as follows:

District No. 2	-	Rene Rocheleau.
District No. 4	-	Mark Newman
District No. 6	-	Daniel D. Boyer
District No. 8	-	James "Randy" Coggins
District No. 10	-	Kenneth C. Pike
District No. 12	-	Harold E. Lowe
District No. 14	-	Daniel "Deke" Johnson
District No. 16	-	Robert W. Zaher
District No. 18	-	Stuart Headford
District D	-	Keith Harman
District H	-	John R. Fair

ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENTS

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The incoming Commander-in-Chief has requested the announcement of the following appointments:

The Adjutant General for the ensuing year will be Allen Kent.

The National Chief of Staff will be John W. Minnick.
The Inspector General will be Wayne Paulson.
The National Sergeant-at-Arms will be Barry Hoffman.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, Delegates, Guests, we will now go into the installation of officers for the ensuing year. National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will escort the installing officer to a position on my right.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: I have the honor to present Past Commander-in-Chief Allen "Gunner" Kent to officially install the officers at today's session.

INSTALLING OFFICER KENT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the term to which you and your subordinates were elected or appointment have now expired. It is my duty to ascertain the following. Have the officers for the ensuing year been duly elected?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER KENT: Have the books of the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General been examined and approved by the National Council of Administration?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER KENT: Does the Adjutant General have on file proof of eligibility for all officers to be installed during this installation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It has.

INSTALLING OFFICER KENT: I would remind you that not having proof of eligibility on file and not being installed at this time, that the by-laws prescribe that you must within 60 days of election or appointment submit to the Adjutant General for his file a copy of your proof of eligibility.

Are the funds in the hands of the Quartermaster General ready to be turned over to his successor when duly installed?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: They are.

INSTALLING OFFICER KENT: Do you have the Charter in your possession?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: I have.

INSTALLING OFFICER KENT: You will now surrender the Charter to me. Past Commander-in-Chief James Mueller, you have now been relieved of your duties as Commander-in-Chief of this organization. It is proper to remind you that in assuming the chair of Past Commander-in-Chief it will be your duty and privilege to counsel and otherwise assist your successor through the experiences you have gained during your term of office. You will now station yourself at my right.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now present the officers-elect at the altar as the Assistant Adjutant General reads the list of officers to be installed.

Commander-in-Chief Gary Kurpius will be the last to be taken to the altar.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN McNEILL: VFW National Officers to be installed:

Gary Kurpius - Commander-in-Chief
George Lisicki - Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief

Glen Gardner - Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief
 Allen "Gunner" Kent - Adjutant General
 Larry M. Maher - Quartermaster General
 Kenneth Burton - Judge Advocate General
 William Self - Surgeon General
 Charlene Cobb - National Chaplain
 John Minnick - National Chief of Staff
 Wayne Paulson - Inspector General
 District No. 1 - Billy Joe Floyd
 District No. 2 - Rene E. Rouchelleau
 District No. 3 - Ronald Dickens
 District No. 4 - Mark M. Newman
 District No. 5 - Paul G. Jones
 District No. 6 - Daniel D. Boyer
 District No. 7 - Michael G. Penney
 District No. 8 - James R. Coggins
 District No. 9 - Arthur A. Shull
 District No. 10 - Kenneth C. Pike
 District No. 11 - William B. Desplanque
 District No. 12 - Harold E. Lowe
 District No. 13 - Steven L. Phelps
 District No. 14 - Daniel K. "Deke" Johnson
 District No. 15 - Jesus R. Gonzalez
 District No. 16 - Robert W. Zaher
 District No. 17 - Dennis G. Guthrie
 District No. 18 - Stuart C. Headford
 District No. 19 - Charles E. Wiggins
 District No. 21 - Stephen J. O'Connor
 District No. 23 - Jack L. Pickard
 District A - Franklin E. Lopes
 District B - Charles R. Brimm
 District C - James M. Longendyke
 District D - Keith E. Harman
 District G - John L. Fitzke
 District H - John R. Fair
 District J - Eugene LeShore
 Past Commander-in-Chief - James R. Mueller

INSTALLING OFFICER KENT: Comrades and delegates, the last to be installed will be Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Gary Kurpius.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Installing Officer, all officers are in their proper place, sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER KENT: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. National Officers-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I will administer to you the Officers' Obligation. You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, the following Officers' Obligation was given at this time: "I do hereby solemnly promise that I will faithfully discharge to the best of my ability the duties of the office to which I have been elected or appointed, according to the Constitution, By-Laws and Ritual of the Veterans of For-

eign Wars of the United States. I solemnly promise that at the close of the term t which I have been elected or appointed, or sooner if so ordered by proper authority, I will surrender immediately to only the duly authorized person or persons, all records, money, or other properties of this organization in my possession or under my control. All this I freely promise, upon my honor, as a loyal citizen of our great Republic. So help me God.”)

INSTALLING OFFICER KENT: As you were.

Comrade Chaplain.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: Will you bow your heads with me. Almighty God, our God and divine protector, give Thy blessings upon these our comrades who now become fellow officers. We beseech Thee, O Lord, who are ever present among us. Grant the wisdom unto them, so that during their deliberations they continue to favor Thee, our glorious country and the veterans organization. May Thy strength sustain them, may Thy power preserve them, may Thy hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.

INSTALLING OFFICER KENT: National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now escort the officers to their respective stations.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Comrade Installing Officer.

INSTALLING OFFICER KENT: At this time, before the Commander-in-Chief receives his Obligation, the appointed officers will now receive their covers from their wives.

The Chief of Staff of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, John Minnick.

The Inspector General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Wayne Paulson.

The Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Allen “Gunner” Kent.

National Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, you now occupy the position of honor to which your comrades have elected you. You learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you so you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake.

The Constitution, By-Laws and Ritual of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your respective offices. By virtue of the confidence placed in you for your election or appointment, we assume that you will acquaint yourselves thoroughly with your duties. You may be seated.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please present the Commander-in-Chief Gary Kurpius.

Commander-in-Chief Kurpius, before administering your Obligation, it is proper to remind you of certain duties. You will be held personally responsible for the Charter of this organization. At the end of your term of office, you will deliver it to the officer appointed to install your successor.

It is your duty as Commander-in-Chief to see that all National Officers perform their duties to the best of their ability. You shall keep yourself informed on all proposed legislation which may affect the welfare of potential and actual comrades of this organization, and strive for adoption of only those measures which will be beneficial.

You will be required to devote all of your time to the many duties of your office. You are expected to make a special study of the Constitution,

By-Laws and Ritual of this organization so that you may render firm and impartial decisions on important questions referred to you.

As Commander-in-Chief, you will be regarded by your comrades and by the general public as typifying wise and vigorous leadership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. May all of your efforts and accomplishments bring credit to your administration and to our organization.

Comrade Gary Kurpius, are you willing and ready to assume your solemn Obligation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT KURPIUS: I am.

INSTALLING OFFICER KENT: All rise. You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand, give your name as I give mine, and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief-Elect Kurpius received the following Obligation: "In the presence of almighty God and the officers and delegates of this order here assembled, I, Gary Kurpius, do hereby solemnly promise that I will faithfully discharge to the best of my ability the duties of the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to which I have been elected in accordance with the Constitution, By-Laws and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I solemnly promise that at the close of the term to which I have been elected, or sooner if so ordered by proper authority, I will surrender immediately to only the duly authorized person or persons, the national charter, all records, money and other properties of this organization in my possession or under my control.

"I do further solemnly promise that I will be fair and impartial in my actions towards all comrades, and I will always strive to promote the best interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. So help me God.")

INSTALLING OFFICER KENT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I now place in your possession our Charter and I present you with this gavel, which is the emblem of your authority. Use it firmly, but with discretion.

All National Officers, you will stretch forth your right hand and repeat after me: "Comrade Commander Gary Kurpius, to you I pledge my sincere allegiance."

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Officers and Delegates of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I now proclaim the National Officers duly installed and this organization in working order for the ensuing year.

PRESENTATION OF PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAPEL PIN AND GOLD LIFE MEMBERSHIP CARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Thank you very much, Past Commander-in-Chief "Gunner". I have to present the Past Commander-in-Chief Lapel Pin and Gold Life Membership Card to Past Commander-in-Chief Mueller. This is the first time I have had that opportunity to say that, Past Commander-in-Chief. Please come forward.

It is indeed an honor and pleasure to present to you your Gold Membership Card from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Pat, will you come up with him, please, to present Jim with his Lapel Pin.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, thank you for a wonderful year. You know the progress we have made. I am going to use some of the remarks that my wife used when she talked to the Ladies Auxiliary. I have had the honor and privilege in this country to see soldiers go to Iraq, to meet with Generals and Ambassadors, to see castles, some of the most beautiful cemeteries that we honor our shrines to honor our men and women buried overseas in that country. I have seen some beautiful places. I have seen some beautiful gardens. But the most beautiful garden I have seen is all of you. Thank you. (Applause)

ACCEPTANCE ADDRESS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Comrades, I am profoundly grateful to the delegates of the 107th National Convention for the honor, trust and confidence you have bestowed on me. I, along with Senior Vice Commander George Lisicki and Junior Vice Commander Glen Gardner, stand here ready to serve.

To Jim Mueller, John Furgess and all the Past Chiefs here today, especially Past Chief and current Adjutant General "Gunner" Kent for installing me, thank you for your leadership, your guidance and for your mentorship.

To my Post 9365 in Wasilla and the great Departments of Alaska and Minnesota, thank you for the years of support and friendship. I also want to extend special thanks to John Minnick and Marty Miller from the Alaska Department for what they did for my campaign.

The new National President Linda Meader and all the members of the Ladies Auxiliary, thank you for what you do daily for the good of this organization. I look forward to working with all of you.

To my very special guests, children Katie, Dustin, Jill and her husband, Jamie Yoder, my brother Dennis, my brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Jay and Linda Poissaint, and their daughter and my niece, Air Force Captain Dana Hattabaugh, thank you all for your love and for your support. You make this day even more special by being here.

And to my wife Nancy, I want to publicly thank you for your patience, your understanding, and for your love. Without your unconditional support, I would not be here today.

Where is the World War II generation? Please stand up. Comrades, our nation's population was only 133 million people when we fielded a great military force of 16 million men and women to defeat tyranny on every ocean and on three continents. It came at a tremendous cost of almost 300,000 combat deaths in less than four years.

This generation did their duty, they came home, and they went about their lives, and in the process they were directly responsible for the tremendous era of growth and prosperity our nation enjoyed in the second half of the twentieth century.

Where is the Korean War generation? Please stand up. Comrades, our nation's population was 155 million people when we fielded a great military force of about 6 million men and women to fight Communist aggression on the Korean peninsula. Theirs is often called "the forgotten war", but there is nothing forgotten about more than 36,000 deaths in three years of fighting. This generation, many of whom also fought in World War II, this

generation did their duty.

Where is the Vietnam War generation? Please stand up. Comrades, our nation's population was 185 million people when we fielded a great military force of almost 9 million men and women to fight Communist aggression on the Southeast Asian peninsula, in a conflict that would last ten years and consume 58,000 American lives.

Like many of you, I am a Vietnam veteran. I was drafted, I served, and I returned home to a nation embroiled in the bitter politics of the war, but I am as proud of my military service as anyone else in this room from any other war or conflict because our generation, too, did its duty.

I served as a Department Service Officer for 20 years and I have never met anyone who wasn't proud of their military service. Let me repeat that: I have never met anyone who wasn't proud of their military service.

I mention this because our nation has now been at war for almost five years against an enemy that wears no uniform, flies no flag, and swears allegiance to no country.

I mention this because we are at war against an enemy that hates democracy, hates a free economy, hates tolerance, and hates every freedom that our nation has struggled to achieve in our 230-year history.

I mention this because we are at war against an enemy that hates America and everything we stand for, and the only thing standing between us and them is our United States military.

Now, where is the post-Vietnam generation, those who stood watch over Korea, on ships or on subs, who served in Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, the first Gulf War, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and now in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq? Please stand up.

Comrades, our nation's population is now 300 million, yet we field the most powerful military in the history of the world with only 2.2 million servicemen and women. That's less than one percent of the population of America.

General George S. Patton once said, "I am a soldier, I fight where I am told, and I win where I fight." The General would be very proud of this new generation because they, too, are doing their duty.

Comrades, this new generation represents the future of our country and the future of our great organization, but what sort of VFW will they inherit if we can't get eligible veterans to join? More than half of our 2.2 million servicemen and women are already eligible to join the VFW by virtue of their service in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. But that number pales in comparison to the 16 million veterans who are also eligible to join us. That is more than 65 percent of America's living veteran population.

With all of these membership-eligible people, why then did 23 of our 54 Departments fail to reach 100 percent this year? The answer, unfortunately, is because some of us are stuck in the 1960s or '70s.

Comrades, membership drives everything we do, but we won't get a new generation, or even the older generation, to join us if we don't recognize and adapt to the changing world around us. There has to be something more attractive about the VFW than just the bar. There has to be something that the VFW can provide to the community that makes people want to come to us.

Sixty percent of the new generation is married and most of their spouses work. They are paying \$400 a month or more for day care when they could be paying an enterprising VFW Post that went through the proper licensing and approval.

They are also paying \$100 a month or more for fitness center memberships downtown when they could be paying an enterprising VFW Post that opened its own health club. There are endless ideas for attracting new members or to generate new business, but it all starts with the basic realization that the new generation doesn't need us. I will repeat that, the new generation of military members and veterans do not need us. It is us that needs them.

So, what are we going to do to make ourselves more attractive? With so little free time, if the new generation does get involved in the VFW, they will want to participate in programs that benefit the entire family, but I guarantee you that no one will want to join a VFW health club or bring their children to a VFW day care center, or log at a VFW cyber café, as long as smoking is still permitted indoors.

We are a democratic organization that is letting 20 percent of the population tell us that the Post will fail if people can't smoke inside. That's bunk.

I know many VFW members and spouses who will not attend Post meetings or events because of the smoke. I have read many articles about the VFW being the last building in town where indoor smoking is still permitted, and some members quoted in the newspapers are celebrating if they just won a great battle against government and social interference.

Comrades, that is not a victory, it is a sad commentary that unfortunately paints all of us with the same brush. American society and the VFW National Office have changed with the times, and so must you if you want your Post to survive.

Having your Post join the list of 148 other Posts that either closed or consolidated this past year because of membership problems is not a victory in anyone's book; it is a failure of leadership.

I ask that you take that thought back home with you and remember that we are a "service organization" first and foremost, and our future rests with attracting new members who want to believe that the VFW is more than just a bar, and who wants to believe that the VFW is an organization that regards change as a recognition of the future and not a criticism of the past.

Whether our duty station was on the land, sea or in the air, we stood guard on behalf of all Americans, and it is for that reason that the theme for my year will be to support those who did their duty and stood their watch. The theme for my year will be to put "Veterans First."

Together with our Auxiliaries, the VFW donates millions of volunteer hours and dollars every year in our communities, but just how much of that time and money went to benefit veterans' programs? Now, I am not asking you to cease your civic responsibilities, but I am asking that you examine their requests and priorities a little more, and put "veterans first" programs up front at least 51 percent of the time.

The perfect example of putting "Veterans First" occurred last year when hurricanes slammed into five states along our Gulf Coast. Our Posts down South, in places named Beauregard, Covington, Addis, Lake Arthur and

elsewhere, were too busy caring for those in need to worry about their own personal belongings.

From the Department of California's contribution of \$30,000 to VFW Post 3457, or Saipan's donation of \$5,000, we sent more than \$560,000 to the Department of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas to help them help other veterans survive and rebuild.

Putting "Veterans First" generates powerful stories in the press and leaves a lasting impression on the people we help, and perhaps there were some of the many reasons why those five Departments all achieved All-American status this year. Some other examples: In Massachusetts, Ray Roberge took advantage of a state lottery program that awards a new one-dollar lottery ticket for every 25 losing tickets that are turned in.

It took four months of collecting, but Ray drove up to the State Lottery Commission with 300,000 losing tickets and took 12,000 new ones back to VFW Post 7272, where volunteers began scratching. Their winnings topped \$7,500, and all the money went to support Disabled Veterans, the VFW's National Home for Children, and Post College Scholarship Programs.

Arizona Auxiliary Member Phyllis Lacey has now volunteered more than 21,000 hours at the VA Medical Center. That's more than ten years worth of 40-hour work weeks.

VFW Post 1390 in St. Maries, Idaho, closed its doors recently, but before they merged with another Post, they sold their building and gave \$5,000 checks each to the National Home, to Operation Uplink and to the local veterans hospital and county food bank.

Tiny Delaware, the first state to enter the Union, is forty-fifth in population and forty-ninth in size, but the Department of Delaware is mighty big when it comes to contributions to Operation Uplink, almost \$200,000 in four years. Delaware also reached All-American status this year.

These are powerful stories, and the people we help will never forget about the day someone from the VFW cared enough to make a difference in the life of another.

Membership allows us to accomplish our mission on the home front, but we must never forget those who have gone before us, and those who will come after us. We must never forget our mission is to "Honor the Dead by Helping the Living."

Eighty-nine people have served before me as Commander-in-Chief of this great organization, and I guarantee you that the vision they had for leading the VFW involved looking forward, not behind.

Robley Rex, at 105 years young, is our last surviving World War I member. He couldn't make the trip here this year from Louisville, but if he had he would tell you stories about the VFW's forefathers who cared enough about the organization to change it to match a changing world.

I know change is difficult, and none of us like it, but it is absolutely necessary for the survival and growth of our great organization.

Our nation has been at war for almost five years now. It is a war that continues to impact every town and city and every state and territory, wherever there are military folks in uniform and family members who await their safe return.

We have to be there for them and those countless others who are standing strong for America at home and abroad. We have to be there for Peggy

Closson of Springfield, Illinois, and other parents who have loved ones deployed. Peggy wore two watches on her wrist, one set to Illinois time and the other to Iraq time, while her son, David, was deployed for a year with his National Guard Unit. David is a third-generation VFW Life Member.

We have to be there for 22-year-old paralyzed Iraqi War Veteran Kyle Burleson down in Shreveport, Louisiana. VFW Post 2238 is helping to build him a new \$300,000 home that is wheelchair friendly.

We have to be there for Army Master Sergeant and All-American Post Commander Tim Borland, who you heard from early this week, and who is winging his way back to Iraq to finish up his year-long tour.

And we have to be there for Allen George and the rest of his Alabama National Guard Unit. Allen left early this month for his first deployment to Iraq. He is the son of Stan George from the VFW Washington Office.

From our Posts in the Far East to the East Coast, and from Europe to Latin America and the West Coast, we have to be there for America's veterans, our service members, and for their families.

We have to be there for them on Capitol Hill where there are 32,000 registered lobbyists representing more than 20,000 clients, who I guarantee have no interest in helping veterans.

We have to be there to insure the VA keeps its promise to care for America's veterans of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

We have to be there for our young and not-so-young veterans who are wading through a maze of paperwork just to file a VA claim. Our VFW Certified Service Officers helped more than 107,000 veterans last year receive almost \$1 billion in earned compensation or pension.

We have to be there for the thousands of unemployed veterans in the 20 to 24-year-old age group, whose unemployment rate of 11 percent is more than twice the national average. We need to use our individual and collective influence to insure that America's business community hires these intelligent servicemen and women who are looking for jobs today, and hires the thousands of others once the war ends and they leave military service.

We have to be there for the families of the 88,000 missing and unaccounted for American servicemen, especially when money is stripped from the POW-MIA Accounting Command's budget in order to fund unrelated operational expenses. The VFW got that money returned to J-PAC.

We have to insure that the VFW Unmet Needs Program is there for military families like Rachele and Steve Marfill, who needed financial assistance while Steve was recuperating at Walter Reed from wounds he received in Iraq from a car bomb explosion.

We have to be there to nurture relationships with large corporations like General Motors, Home Depot and Wal-Mart, who want to support our troops and veterans.

We have to be there to support our 8,507 Posts because they are the VFW's boots-on-ground in every community across this great land. And, ultimately, we have to be there for the 2.2 million servicemen and women who are now the guardians of this great country and of every freedom we hold dear.

We are the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. We are the nation's older major veterans' organization, and we are the largest organi-

zation of combat veterans in the country.

Within our ranks are the bravest of the brave, and this generation knows it. We have to be there for them, to shake their hand, to look them in the eye, and to say thank you for your service, for your commitment and for your sacrifice.

We have to be there to say "thank you for doing your duty."

Comrades, I thank you once again for your faith and for your trust. I look forward to serving this next year as your Commander-in-Chief and working as closely as I can with each and every one of you. Thank you so very much.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

CLOSING CEREMONIES

COMRADE LARRY LeFEBVRE (Post 552 – Michigan): There being no further business to come before this convention, and the officers having been duly elected and installed for the ensuing year, I move that the 107th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be closed sine die.

COMRADE JAMES WARNER (Post 9283 – Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, James Warner, a delegate from Post 9283 and the Department Commander of Michigan, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: We have a motion and a second to close the 107th National Convention. All those in favor will signify by "aye"; all those opposed. The motion passes.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please perform the closing ceremonies.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. Captain of the VFW National Honor Guard, prepare to advance and retire the colors.

(Whereupon, the Honor Guard Retired the Colors at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Comrade Chaplain, the Closing Prayer.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN COBB: Almighty God, the hour has come when we must part. We commit ourselves to Thy love, Thou who are a strong tower of defense and our protection against life's battles, we may be strong and brave, living such lives and stainless integrity as shown reflect honor upon our country and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

I ask this in Thy great and holy name. May Thy good providence shield us from all harm, watch over those who even now guard the gates of freedom and bring us together again in true comradeship and peace. Amen.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies for today's 107th convention have been completed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. I now declare the 107th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars closed.

(Whereupon, the convention was duly adjourned at 10:00 o'clock a.m., sine die.)

AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL BY-LAWS AND MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

B-1

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

Section 102—Applications-Affiliation of New Members.

Amend the third paragraph, entitled "Members-at-Large", by deleting it in its entirety.

Amend the fourth paragraph, entitled "Department Members-at-Large" by substituting in its place the following:

Members-at-Large. Anyone eligible for membership who is unable to join or does not desire membership in a Post may become a Member-at-Large in a Department upon application to the Adjutant General or the Department Adjutant, proof of eligibility and payment of annual dues. Annual Dues shall be \$35.00, \$21.00 of which shall be National Organization Dues which shall be transmitted to the Quartermaster General monthly on a consolidated report and \$14.00 of which shall be Department Dues, provided the Department Council of Administration may establish some other amount as Department Dues.

APPROVED

B-2

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

Section 111—Life Members.

Amend Section 111, Life Members, National By-Laws, by substituting in its place the following:

Life Members: Any person who is a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may become a life member by payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. Any person otherwise eligible for membership, but not previously

a member, may become a life member upon election to membership in accordance with Section 103, payment of any admission fee in accordance with Section 104 and submission of a life membership application and payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A former member otherwise eligible for reinstatement to membership may become a life member upon reinstatement to membership in accordance with Section 106, payment of such reinstating fee as may be assessed by the Post and submission of a life membership application and the payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. With respect to Members-at-Large, the application and fee shall be submitted in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Life Membership Fees:

(1.) Plan E Life Membership fees shall be charged in accordance with the following Plan E fee schedule effective January 1, 2007:

Attained Age Member	Plan E Life Fee
Through 30	\$425
31-40	410
41-50	375
51-60	335
61-70	290
71-80	225
81 & over	170

The applicable fee from the effective life membership fee schedule will be determined using the applicant's attained age as of December 31st of the current calendar year in which the application is submitted, regardless of actual date of birth.

Upon receipt of the applicable fee, the Post Quartermaster shall immediately forward payment together with the life membership application of the individual to the Quartermaster General (or, if required by the Department, through the Department Quartermaster to the Quartermaster General). In the case of Members-at-Large, the payment along with the life membership application shall be forwarded to the Quartermaster General. The life membership shall become effective immediately upon the receipt of the full fee by the Quartermaster General. The Quartermaster General shall deposit all sums received for life membership in a special fund called the Life Membership Fund, and shall issue a suitable life membership card.

A life member shall not be subject to further membership dues levies or life membership fees of any kind and shall have all the benefits and privileges of Post, Department and National membership as long as the member shall live; provided, however, a life member who shall subsequently be found ineligible for membership shall forfeit such life membership, in which case such life member shall be entitled to a proportionate refund of life membership fees paid. A life member who shall be dis-

charged from the organization by reason of disciplinary action shall forfeit such life membership. In such event, no refund of fees paid will be made.

Life Membership Committee: The Life Membership Committee shall consist of the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General. Such committee shall also be known as the Board of Trustees of the Life Membership Fund. The Quartermaster General shall be treasurer of the Life Membership Committee and shall have custody of the Life Membership Fund. The Life Membership Committee shall administer the Life Membership Fund, investing and reinvesting funds, to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Annual Payment:

(1.) An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members of each respective Plan recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year and, in addition, the same amount shall be paid in January of the following year for persons who have become life members during the period September 1 to December 31, provided, however, that, to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments to the Post to which the member belongs, Department and National Headquarters shall never total less than:

With respect to Plan E	\$27.00
Plan D	\$16.50
Plan A, B & C	\$10.50

(2.) Death of a life member following issuance of the checks paying the member's per capita tax for the next calendar year to National Headquarters, Department and Post, shall not be a cause for a refund of such per capita tax for that calendar year.

APPROVED

B-3

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE V—DEPARTMENTS

Section 515—Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

Amend Section 515, National By-Laws, paragraph (d), by deleting the second sentence beginning with "Additionally," and replace it with the following:

Additionally, Department Commanders, Department Senior Vice Commanders, Department Junior Vice Commanders, Department Adjutants and Department Quartermasters shall submit proof of eligibility to the Adjutant General.

APPROVED

B-4

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL CONVENTION

Section 605 – National Dues.

Amend Section 605 – National Dues, National By-Laws, by substituting in its place the following:

Effective January 1, 2007, the National Organization dues shall be \$11.50 for every member of a Post in good standing, except Life Members, which shall include a year's subscription to the VFW Magazine.

Beginning January 1, 2007, \$8.50 of the National Dues, when collected from the member, will be retained by the National Organization and \$1.00, when collected from the member, will be rebated back to the Department to which the member belongs. The remaining \$2.00 will be distributed as outlined in Section 605 of the Manual of Procedure.

APPROVED

B-5

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL CONVENTION

Section 618 – National Council of Administration-Composition, Powers and Duties.

Amend Section 618 – National Council of Administration-Composition, Powers and Duties, National By-Laws, by adding to subsection (l) Voting: the following:

On matters requiring action by the National Council of Administration

between stated meetings, the Commander-in-Chief may direct the Adjutant General to conduct mail ballots, the results of such mail ballots shall be reported for the record at the next stated meeting.

APPROVED

B-6

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE IX—DISCIPLINE

Section 902— Offenses.

Amend Section 902, National By-Laws, by adding paragraph 16 as follows:

16. Knowingly making or causing to be made a false entry in or false alteration of a government record. Knowingly conveying or causing to be conveyed in any form false information concerning one's military record.

APPROVED

B-7

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Amend Article 1, Membership, National By-Laws, by deleting the title of the section and renaming it as follows:

ARTICLE I-MEMBERS

APPROVED

B-8

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 101—Eligibility.

Amend Section 101 – Eligibility, National By-Laws, by substituting in its place the following:

ARTICLE I-MEMBERS

Section 101- Eligibility.

Any citizen of the United States may be a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States who is serving or has served honorably in the Armed Forces of the United States:

- (1) in a foreign war, insurrection, or expedition, which service has been recognized as campaign medal service and is governed by the authorization of the award of a campaign badge by the Government of the United States; or
- (2) on the Korean peninsula or in its territorial waters for not less than 30 consecutive days, or a total of 60 days, after June 30, 1949; or
- (3) while a member of the armed forces serving in an area which entitled the individual to receive special pay for duty subject to hostile fire or imminent danger.

Refer to Section 101 of the Manual of Procedure.

APPROVED

B-9

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 102—Applications-Affiliation of New Members.

Amend Section 102 – Applications-Affiliation of New Members, National By-Laws, by substituting in its place the following:

Every application for membership shall comply with the rules and regulations as prescribed in Section 102 of the Manual of Procedure.

Except as otherwise provided herein, with respect to Members-at-Large, each eligible member shall be a member of a Post. Membership in more than one Post at one time is prohibited. Any person who is or becomes a member of more than one Post shall elect to remain in the Post of his choice and surrender membership in any other Post. In the event no election is made, the Commander-in-Chief or his designee shall assign the member to a Post.

Any membership application erroneously accepted by a Post shall be a nullity and no person shall obtain any right or privilege of membership by reason of erroneous acceptance of an application or admission to membership.

APPROVED

Addendum To Proposed Amendments To National By-Laws

For clarification purposes, B-9 is a substitute for the first 3 paragraphs of Section 102.

Please delete "Amend Section 102 – Application-Affiliation of New Members, National By-Laws, by substituting in its place the following:" and insert "Amend Section 102 – Applications-Affiliation of New Members, National By-Laws, by substituting for the first three paragraphs the following:"

B-10

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 103—Election.

Amend Section 103 – Election, National By-Laws, by substituting in its place the following:

Applicants shall be elected, notified and obligated as prescribed in Section 103 of the Manual of Procedure.

APPROVED

B-11

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 104—Admission Fees and Dues.

Amend Section 104 – Admission Fees and Dues, National By-Laws, by substituting in its place the following:

Each Post shall determine its annual dues and establish an admission fee and/or dues to be charged its new members as prescribed in the Department and National By-Laws.

At least monthly, each Post shall transmit all admission fees and/or dues collected as prescribed in the Department and National By-Laws.

In the event a member surrenders his membership or his membership is terminated in accordance with the National By-Laws, there shall be no refund

of annual dues.

REJECTED

B-12

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 105—Members in Good Standing.

Amend Section 105 – Members in Good Standing, National By-Laws, by substituting in its place the following:

A member whose current dues are paid to December 31 is in good standing and is entitled to all membership rights, unless suspended or terminated, in accordance with the National By-Laws.

If the member's dues are accepted after July 1, he is a member in good standing and entitled to all of the rights and privileges of membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and will not be required to pay dues for any part of the current calendar year.

APPROVED

B-13

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 106—Former Members.

Amend Section 106 – Former Members, National By-Laws, by substituting in its place the following:

A member whose dues are unpaid on January 1 ceases to be a member in good standing and loses all rights and privileges of membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

A former member may reinstate their membership as prescribed in Section 106 of the Manual of Procedure.

APPROVED

B-14

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 107—Transfers.

Amend Section 107 – Transfers, National By-Laws, by substituting in its place the following:

A member may transfer from one Post to another Post as prescribed in Section 107 of the Manual of Procedure and a signed Member Declaration.

In the event that a transfer to another Post or Member-at-Large has been effected and it is subsequently determined that the conditions of the Member Declaration have not been satisfied, then the Department Commander, with respect to transfers within the Department, or the Commander-in-Chief, with respect to transfers between Departments, may revoke, suspend or cancel such transfer.

APPROVED

B-15

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 108—Removing Ineligibles.

Amend Section 108 – Removing Ineligibles, National By-Laws, by deleting it in its entirety and substituting in its place the following:

Section 108— Challenging Members Eligibility.

A member's eligibility may be challenged as prescribed in Section 108 of the Manual of Procedure.

The Commander-in-Chief, in the performance of his duty, shall enforce the provisions of the National By-Laws regarding eligibility to membership and, on determining a member to be ineligible, shall issue an order removing the member from the membership rolls.

APPROVED

B-16

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 109— Right of Appeal.

Amend Section 109 – Right of Appeal, National By-Laws, by substituting in its place the following:

Except with respect to those matters for which other provisions for appeal are made in Section 108, in Sections 211, 310, 409 and 509, or in Article IX, any member aggrieved by the acts or decisions of a Post or Post Commander, a County Council or County Council Commander, or a District or District Commander may appeal to the Department Commander as prescribed in Section 109 of the Manual of Procedure.

The determination of the Department Commander shall have full force and effect unless and until reversed by competent authority. Any member aggrieved by the acts or decisions of a Department Commander, the Department Council of Administration or the Department Convention shall have the right to appeal to the Commander-in-Chief. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief shall have full force and effect unless and until reversed by the National Council of Administration. Any member aggrieved by the acts or decisions of the Commander-in-Chief may make a final appeal to the National Council of Administration.

The procedure for effecting any appeal or appeals under this section shall be as prescribed in Section 109 of the Manual of Procedure.

APPROVED

B-17

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE II—POSTS

Section 201— Formation, Chartering and Instituting.

Amend Section 201 – Formation, Chartering and Instituting, National By-Laws, by deleting it in its entirety and substituting in its place the following:

Section 201— Formation, Institution and Chartering.

Formation. A Post may be formed by completing a charter application consisting of fifty (50) eligible veterans, of which at least twenty-five (25) must be new members, submitted through proper channels to the Commander-in-Chief.

Institution. Each new Post shall be instituted within sixty (60) days of the date the charter application is approved by the Commander-in-Chief. If not instituted within sixty (60) days from the date of approval, said approval may be rescinded.

Chartering. The charter of an instituted Post shall include the name, date of muster, location and list of members. The charter shall remain open for ninety (90) days from the date of institution of the Post.

REJECTED

B-18

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE II—POSTS

Section 202— By-Laws.

Amend Section 202 – By-Laws, National By-Laws, by substituting in its place the following:

Posts may, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a stated meeting, adopt By-Laws provided each member had been notified at least twenty (20) days in advance and, upon request provided a copy of the proposed By-Laws.

By-Laws approved by a Post shall be forwarded as provided in the Manual of Procedure prior to becoming effective.

Amendments. Unless otherwise provided in the Post By-Laws, the Post By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a stated meeting provided each member had been notified at least twenty (20) days in advance and, upon request provided a copy of the proposed amendments.

APPROVED

B-19

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE II—POSTS

Section 206—Change of Location; Change of Meeting Place.

Amend Section 206 – Change of Location; Change of Meeting Place, National By-Laws, by deleting it in its entirety and substituting in its place the following:

Section 206—Change of Location, Meeting Place, Day or Time.

A Post may change its chartered location, meeting place, meeting day or time as prescribed in Section 206 of the Manual of Procedure.

APPROVED

B-20

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE II—POSTS**Section 208— Change of Name.**

Amend Section 208 – Change of Name, National By-Laws, by substituting in its place the following:

A Post may change its chartered name as prescribed in Section 208 of the Manual of Procedure.

APPROVED

B-21

Proposed by Departments of California and Washington

ARTICLE VI—NATIONAL CONVENTION**Section 617— Regional National Council of Administration Members-How Elected.**

Amend Section 617 – Regional National Council of Administration Members-How Elected, National By-Laws, by deleting all Regional Districts numbered 1 through 23, which follows the second paragraph of Section 617, and insert the following Regional Districts numbered 1 through 25 in its place:

Maine, New Hampshire
 Vermont, Massachusetts
 Maryland, New Jersey
 Dist. Of Columbia, Delaware, Europe
 Indiana, Missouri
 Virginia, West Virginia
 Tennessee, Kentucky
 Georgia, Alabama
 South Carolina, North Carolina
 Oklahoma, Arkansas
 Wisconsin, Iowa

North Dakota, Wyoming
 Kansas, Colorado
 Montana, Idaho
 New Mexico, Arizona
 Alaska, Hawaii
 Utah, Nevada
 Rhode Island, Connecticut
 Louisiana, Mississippi
 21. Minnesota, Nebraska
 23. Michigan, South Dakota
 24. Pacific Areas, Latin America/Caribbean
 25. Washington, Oregon
 Pennsylvania
 Illinois
 New York
 Ohio
 California
 Texas
 Florida

This By-Law change shall be placed into effect upon the date of installation of the newly elected National Officers at the National Convention in the year 2007.

REJECTED

B-22

Proposed by National District Council Member, District G

ARTICLE XIII—MENS AUXILIARY

Amend ARTICLE XIII-MENS AUXILIARY , National By-Laws, by deleting it in its entirety and replacing it as follows and to delete in its entirety Article XI – Ladies Auxiliary.

ARTICLE XIII-AUXILIARY

Section 1301-Formation.

A Post, if the By-Laws of the Department having jurisdiction so provide, may form an association separately constituted as a subordinate unit. The Department in which the Post is located shall charter such unit. Such association shall be subject to the rules established by the respective Department Convention, Department Commander and Post.

Departments are not authorized to issue charters to units other than those sponsored by a Post. Formation, control and disbandment of these associations, as well as suspension or cancellation of charters, shall be in the

manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure and as may be provided in Department By-Laws not inconsistent with the Manual.

Section 1302-Eligibility.

Membership in the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be limited to husbands, wives, widowers, widows, fathers, mothers, stepfathers, stepmothers (who have performed the duties of parent), grandfathers, grandmothers, sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters, foster and step sons, foster and step daughters (who attained that status prior to age sixteen (16) and for whom the duties of parent were performed), brothers, sisters, half brothers, half sisters, and foster and step brothers, foster and step sisters, who attained that status prior to age sixteen (16), of persons who were or are eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Members must be not less than sixteen (16) years old.

Men and women eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be eligible for membership in the Auxiliary.

Section 1303-By-Laws, Rules of Order and Order of Business.

The By-Laws adopted by any such Auxiliary shall not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual, or laws and usage of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or Department. Such By-Laws shall conform to rules prescribed by the respective Department and Post.

REJECTED

B-23

Proposed by National District Council Member, District G

ARTICLE XI—LADIES AUXILIARY

Amend ARTICLE XI-LADIES AUXILIARY , National By-Laws, by deleting it in its entirety and replacing it as follows and to delete in its entirety Article XIII – Mens Auxiliary.

ARTICLE XI—AUXILIARY

Section 1101-Organization and Disbandment of Auxiliaries.

The Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a national association of eligible members heretofore chartered by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Such association shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief and the National Council of Administration.

The Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be governed by such By-Laws, Rules and Regulations and Ritual as may be adopted by it and by the lawful orders issued by the National Officers of the Auxiliary, provided such By-Laws, Rules and Regulations, Ritual and orders do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the lawful orders or directives of the National Convention, the Commander-in-Chief or the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may issue charters to Department, District, County Council, and Post Auxiliaries as well as suspension or cancellation of charters shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Auxiliary officers shall make such reports as may be required in the Manual of Procedure.

Section 1102-Eligibility.

Membership in the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be limited to husbands, wives, widowers, widows, fathers, mothers, stepfathers, stepmothers (who have performed the duties of parent), grandfathers, grandmothers, sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters, foster and step sons, foster and step daughters (who attained that status prior to age sixteen (16) and for whom the duties of parent were performed), brothers, sisters, half brothers, half sisters, and foster and step brothers, foster and step sisters who attained that status prior to age sixteen (16) of persons who were or are eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Members must be not less than sixteen (16) years old.

Men and women eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be eligible for membership in the Auxiliary.

Section 1103-Ritual, By-Laws and Regulations.

The Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may adopt By-Laws, a Ritual and such Rules and Regulations as are deemed necessary and may authorize Department, District, County Council and Post Auxiliaries to adopt By-Laws. In the event any part of the By-Laws, Ritual and Rules and Regulations so adopted are inconsistent with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the By-Laws, Rules and Regulations of the respective Department, District, County Council or Post, such part shall be considered null and void.

Section 1104-Incorporation.

(a)The Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is

authorized to incorporate under appropriate not-for-profit corporation laws, provided such incorporation, and the Articles of Incorporation and any amendments thereto, are reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief and approved by a two-thirds vote of the National Convention of the Auxiliary and provided further that the Articles of Incorporation include those provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure. Failure to comply with those provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the Charter.

(b) The Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may, by duly approved amendments to its By-Laws, authorize Department Auxiliaries and Post Auxiliaries to incorporate under appropriate not-for-profit corporation laws and may adopt such Rules and Regulations as are appropriate concerning such incorporation, provided that the respective Department or Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States approves such incorporation, which approval shall be given in the same manner as for initial formation of an Auxiliary, and, provided further that the Articles of Incorporation of any such corporation include the provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure. Should any state law prohibit the provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure or Articles of Incorporation, it shall be permissible to change the provision sufficiently to conform to state law so long as the change is not inconsistent with the purpose of the Manual of Procedure provision. Failure to comply with those provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the Charter.

(End of Article XI)

REJECTED

B-24

Proposed by Department of Connecticut

ARTICLE IX—DISCIPLINE

Section 903—Procedure for Disciplinary Actions.

Amend Section 903 – Procedure for Disciplinary Actions, National By-Laws, by adding subsection (i):

- (i) **Procedure-Cancellation of Hearing or Penalty.** In the event that a disciplinary action is initiated by a Post Commander or a Department Commander or the Commander-in-Chief, and the accused member has requested a hearing-or has not requested a hearing and an action of penalty has been taken-no body of the organization or any officer of the Veterans of Foreign Wars shall cancel or interfere with that disciplinary hearing or penalty, except as provided for in the appeals process set forth in the Manual of Procedure and the Organization By-Laws.

REJECTED

B-25

Proposed by Department of Europe

ARTICLE V—DEPARTMENTS**Section 521—Council of Administration - Composition, Powers and Duties.**

Amend Section 521 – Council of Administration-Composition, Powers and Duties, National By-Laws, by changing the first paragraph by replacing the word “and” on the thirteenth line, after the word, “Hawaii” with a “comma”; and add after the word “Latin America/Caribbean” the words “and Europe”.

APPROVED

B-26

Proposed by Department of Europe

ARTICLE V—DEPARTMENTS**Section 521—Council of Administration - Composition, Powers and Duties.**

Amend Section 521, Council of Administration – Composition, Powers and Duties, National By-Laws, by changing the first paragraph by removing the words beginning on the twelfth line starting with “In the Departments of” through the seventeenth line adding “Departments may adopt By-Laws to include all Post Commanders as voting members of the Council of Administration.”

REJECTED

B-27

Proposed by Department of Florida

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP**Section 102—Applications-Affiliation of New Members.**

Amend Section 102-Applications-Affiliation of New Members, National By-Laws, by deleting the third paragraph entitled “Members-at-Large” in its entirety.

Amend the fourth paragraph entitled “Department Members-at-Large by deleting it in its entirety and substituting in its place the following:

Members-at-Large. Anyone eligible for membership who is unable to join or does not desire membership in a Post may become a Member-at-Large in a Department upon application to the Department Adjutant, proof of eligibility and payment of annual dues in amount to be determined by the Department Council of Administration. The Department

Quartermaster shall transmit to the Quartermaster General twenty-one (\$21.00) of the dues collected for each Member-at-Large.

REJECTED

B-28

Proposed by Department of Louisiana

ARTICLE II—POSTS

Section 220—Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers.

Amend Section 220-Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers, National By-Laws, by deleting paragraph seven (7) in its entirety and replacing it as follows:

Any Post Commander or Post Quartermaster whose office is vacated by the Department Commander due to failure to fulfill the duties of office as specified in Section 218 of the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure will not be allowed to hold elective office in the Post for a period of two years.

REJECTED

B-29

Proposed by Department of Maryland

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 111—Life Members.

Amend Section 111-Life Members, National By-Laws, by deleting the Section in its entirety and inserting the following:

(a) **Life Members:** Any person who is a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may become a life member by payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. Any person otherwise eligible for membership, but not previously a member, may become a life member upon election to membership in accordance with Section 103, payment of any admission fee in accordance with Section 104 and submission of a life membership application and payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A former member otherwise eligible for reinstatement to membership may become a life member upon reinstatement to membership in accordance with Section 106, payment of such reinstating fee as may be assessed by the Post and submission of a life membership application and the payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. With respect to Members-at-Large, the application and fee shall be submitted in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

(b) Life Membership Fees:

(1). Plan E Life Membership fees shall be charged in accordance with the following Plan E fee schedule effective January 1, 2007:

Attained Age	
Through 30	\$375
	355
41-50	330
	295
61-70	250
71-80	200
81 & over	150

The applicable fee from the life membership fee schedule will be determined using the applicant's attained age as of December 31st of the current calendar year in which the application is submitted regardless of actual date of birth.

Upon receipt of the applicable fee, the Post Quartermaster shall immediately forward payment together with the life membership application of the individual to the Quartermaster General (or, if required by the Department, through the Department Quartermaster to the Quartermaster General). In the case of Members-at-Large, the payment along with the life membership application shall be forwarded to the Quartermaster General. The life membership shall become effective immediately upon the receipt of the full fee by the Quartermaster General. The Quartermaster General shall deposit all sums received for life membership in a special fund called the Life Membership Fund, and shall issue a suitable life membership card.

A life member shall not be subject to further membership dues levies or life membership fees of any kind and shall have all the benefits and privileges of Post, Department and National membership as long as the member shall live; provided, however, a life member who shall subsequently be found ineligible for membership shall forfeit such life membership, in which case such life member shall be entitled to a proportionate refund of life membership fees paid. A life member who shall be discharged from the organization by reason of disciplinary action shall forfeit such life membership. In such event, no refund of fees paid will be made.

(c) Life Membership Committee: The Life Membership Committee shall consist of the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General. Such committee shall also be known as the Board of Trustees of the Life Membership Fund. The Quartermaster General shall be treasurer of the Life Membership Committee and shall have custody of the Life Membership Fund. The Life Membership Committee shall administer the Life Membership Fund, investing and reinvesting funds, to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(d) Annual Payment:

(1.) An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members of each respective Plan recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year and, in addition, the same amount shall be paid in January of the following year for persons who have become life members during the period September 1 to December 31, provided, however, that to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments to the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department Headquarters and the Post to which the life member belongs, shall never total less than:

With respect to Plan E	\$24.00
Plan D	\$16.50
Plan A, B & C	\$10.50

(2) The amounts payable under d (1) above, shall with respect to a member of a Post be divided equally between the Post, Department and National Headquarters, and with respect to a Department Member-at-Large, be divided equally between the Department and National Headquarters.

(3) Death of a life member following issuance of the checks paying the member's per capita tax for the next calendar year to National Headquarters, Department and Post, shall not be a cause for a refund of such per capita tax for that calendar year.

REJECTED

B-30

Proposed by Department of Massachusetts

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 102—Applications-Affiliation of New Members.

Amend Section 102- Applications-Affiliation of New Members, National By-Laws, by deleting the third paragraph entitled "Members-at-Large" in its entirety and amend the fourth paragraph entitled "Department Members-at-Large" by deleting it in its entirety and substituting in place the following:

Member-at-Large. Anyone eligible for membership who is unable to join or does not desire membership in a Post may become a Member-at-Large in a Department upon application to the Department Adjutant, proof of eligibility and payment of annual dues. Annual Dues shall be transmitted to the Quartermaster General monthly on a consolidated report and \$14.00 of which shall be Department dues, provided the Department Council of Administration may establish some other amount as Department dues.

REJECTED**B-31**

Proposed by Department of Oregon

ARTICLE VI—NATIONAL CONVENTION**Section 617—Regional National Council of Administration Members-How Elected.**

Amend Section 617 – Regional National Council of Administration Members-How Elected, National By-Laws, by deleting all Regional Districts numbered 1 through 19, which follows the second paragraph of Section 617, and insert the following Regional Districts numbered 1 through 23 in its place:

Maine, New Hampshire
 Vermont, Massachusetts
 Maryland, New Jersey
 Dist. Of Columbia, Delaware, Europe
 Indiana, Missouri
 Virginia, West Virginia
 Tennessee, Kentucky
 Georgia, Alabama
 South Carolina, North Carolina
 10. Oklahoma, Arkansas
 11. Wisconsin, Iowa
 12. North Dakota, Wyoming
 13. Kansas, Colorado
 14. Montana, Idaho
 15. New Mexico, Arizona
 16. Alaska, Hawaii
 17. Utah, Nevada
 18. Rhode Island, Connecticut
 19. Louisiana, Mississippi
 20. Minnesota, Nebraska
 21. Michigan, South Dakota
 22. Washington, Oregon
 23. Pacific Areas, Latin America/Caribbean
 Pennsylvania
 Illinois
 New York
 Ohio
 California
 Texas
 J. Florida

This By-Law change shall be placed in effect upon the date of installation of the newly elected National Officers at the National Convention in the

year 2007.
REJECTED

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

M-1

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 111— Life Members.

Insert as a new paragraph the following:

Members-at-Large: – A Member-at-Large in good standing, a prospective Member-at-Large otherwise eligible for membership but not previously a member and a prospective Member at Large that was a former member and otherwise eligible for reinstatement may become a Life Member by submitting the application and applicable fee in the manner prescribed by the National Council of Administration.

APPROVED

M-2

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE VI—NATIONAL CONVENTION

Section 605 –National Dues.

Amend Section 605, Manual of Procedure, by substituting in its place the following:

Effective January 1, 2007, \$9.50 of the National Dues will be distributed as set forth in the By-Laws. The additional \$2.00 will be distributed as follows: \$1.00 to be set aside into an Endowment Fund for Veterans Service Officer Training, and \$1.00 to be set aside into the Veterans Service Grant Fund for Department Veterans Service Grants.

APPROVED

M-3

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Amend Article 1, Membership, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the title of the section and renaming it as follows:

**ARTICLE I-MEMBERS
APPROVED**

M-4

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 101— Eligibility.

Amend Section 101-Eligibility, Manual of Procedure, by substituting for the first paragraph therein the following:

Section 101 – Eligibility.

The following is to be used as a guide in determining eligibility for membership and is furnished as a matter of information concerning the periods during which campaign and/or service medals were authorized:

Hostilities - Persons in the Armed Forces of the United States shall become eligible for membership immediately upon arrival on hostile soil, in hostile waters or the airspace above in the performance of service qualifying such persons for membership.

Subsequent Service - An applicant for membership who had honorable campaign service, terminated by a discharge under honorable conditions, but who later reenlisted or returned to active duty and had subsequent service terminated by a discharge other than honorable shall not be considered eligible for membership. A member of the organization who receives a discharge other than honorable for service subsequent to becoming a member shall, upon issuance of a special order, cease to be a member by reason of ineligibility; provided, however, that such member may request in writing that the Commander-in-Chief determine his eligibility and appeal there from in accordance with the provisions of Section 108. In the event that such discharge is subsequently changed by appropriate governmental authorities, such former member may apply for membership in accordance with the provisions of this Article. Veterans who were originally given a discharge other than honorable for refusal of repatriation shall forever be denied the privilege of membership in this organization, notwithstanding any later change in their status. Any person whose membership has been terminated under the provisions of Article IX of these By-Laws shall not be eligible for membership.

APPROVED**M-5**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP**Section 102— Applications-Affiliation of New Members.**

Amend Section 102-Applications-Affiliation of New Members, Manual of Procedure, by substituting in its place the following:

Every application for membership must be submitted on an approved, signed application outlining the applicant's honorable service, citizenship, eligibility and other pertinent information. Proof of service to establish eligibility for membership rests with the applicant. The Post is responsible for assuring the eligibility of every member accepted to membership.

With respect to active duty military personnel currently performing service qualifying for membership, applications may be submitted on their behalf by a member who shall certify the requisite qualifications for membership based on personal knowledge concerning the applicant and shall be acted upon in accordance with the provisions of Section 103. Active duty military personnel admitted to membership under such procedure shall, within a reasonable time, sign the application, personally certifying eligibility and subscribing to the obligation of membership.

The application shall bear the name and the ID number of the member recommending the applicant and the recommendation of the Post Reviewing Committee.

APPROVED**M-6**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP**Section 103— Election, Notification, Obligation.**

Amend Section 103- Election, Notification, Obligation, Manual of Procedure, by deleting it in its entirety and substituting in its place the following:

Section 103-Election.

Applications. After the applicant has filled out the application card, it should be provided to the Post Adjutant or Quartermaster, together with the dues (and admission fee, if applicable). A receipt shall be given to the applicant.

An applicant may be recommended after eligibility has been fully determined by the Post Reviewing Committee. With respect to a Department Member-at-Large, the Department Headquarters is responsible for the eligibility determination.

The original application of every member will be retained on file with the Adjutant.

Balloting on Applications. Before voting on the application during a Post meeting, the Commander shall allow the members present an opportunity to state their objections, if any, to the admission of the applicant. Unless one member present shall request a written ballot, a vote shall be taken and a majority of the votes cast shall decide acceptance or rejection of the application.

Rejection of Applicant. Should an applicant be rejected by the Post, the admission fee and dues shall be returned. After one year (12 months) he may again make application, but a person shall not be proposed for membership more than twice in one Post. An applicant rejected in one Post may apply to another Post or become a Department Member-at-Large.

Notification. The member shall be notified of his acceptance and that he is in good standing, subject to the By-Laws governing the organization. The member shall receive a membership card and will be eligible to receive a lapel pin.

Obligation. New Post members may receive the obligation according to the Ritual.

APPROVED

M-7

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 104— Admission Fees and Dues.

Amend Section 104- Admission Fees and Dues, Manual of Procedure, by substituting in its place the following:

(See Section 104 of the By-Laws.)

REJECTED

M-8

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 105— Members in Good Standing.

Amend Section 105- Members in Good Standing, Manual of Procedure, by substituting in its place the following:

(See Section 105 of the By-Laws.)

APPROVED

M-9

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 106— Former Members – Reinstatement.

Amend Section 106- Former Members – Reinstatement, Manual of Procedure, by substituting in its place the following:

The annual dues for every member must be accepted if tendered to his Post within one year of the date on which he became delinquent. A member whose dues remain unpaid for a period of more than one year may be required to reapply for membership as prescribed in Section 102 of the By-Laws.

A former member may reinstate their membership in any Post other than the one in which he last paid dues by payment of the current year's dues and as prescribed in Section 107 of the By-Laws.

APPROVED

M-10

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 107— Transfers.

Amend Section 107- Transfers, Manual of Procedure, by deleting it in its entirety and substituting in its place the following:

Section 107 – Transfers.

A member may transfer from one Post to another Post provided the following conditions are met: completion of the application as prescribed in Section 102 of the Manual of Procedure signing a Member Declaration acceptance by the Post.

MEMBER DECLARATION

"I hereby certify that it is my desire to transfer and/or reinstate my membership. I further certify that I am not indebted to my former post, be it through oral or written commitment or otherwise, and that, to the best of my knowledge, no written charges have been preferred against me by my former post and I understand that any such indebtedness or charge which may be disclosed any time hereafter will render this transfer null and void."

Members transferring should surrender their membership card to the Quartermaster of the accepting Post.

APPROVED

M-11

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 108— Removing Ineligibles.

Amend Section 108- Removing Ineligibles, Manual of Procedure, by deleting it in its entirety and substituting in its place the following:

Section 108-Challenging Members Eligibility.

A Post shall, upon motion duly passed at any regular or special meeting called for such purpose, challenge the eligibility of an individual member. The challenged member shall be notified within five (5) days of such action by certified or registered mail addressed to the member's last known address, at which time he shall have fifteen (15) days to provide proof of eligibility to the Post Adjutant for disposition. If proof of eligibility cannot be established the member's application and proof of service shall be submitted to the Department Commander for review and disposition.

If proof of eligibility cannot be established by the Department Commander, the member's application and proof of service shall be submitted to the Commander-in-Chief, who shall determine the eligibility of the member. Should the Commander-in-Chief determine the member to be ineligible, he shall issue an order directing that the member be removed from the membership rolls. A copy of the order shall be mailed to the member at his or her last known address.

A Department Commander may initiate a challenge of eligibility of any member in their respective Department by written request to the Commander-in-Chief.

The Commander-in-Chief may challenge the eligibility of any member.

With respect to ineligibility by reason of a less than honorable discharge, the determination by the Commander-in-Chief and any appeal shall be limited to consideration of the type of discharge received and shall not extend to the reason or reasons for such discharge.

Any member removed from the membership rolls by order of the Commander-in-Chief for ineligibility shall forfeit all rights and privileges as a member. In such event, no refund of annual dues will be made.

Appeals from determinations of the Commander-in-Chief concerning eligibility of a member shall be made in the manner prescribed for appeals to the National Council of Administration under Section 109 of the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

APPROVED

M-12

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP

Section 109— Right of Appeal.

Amend Section 109- Right of Appeal, Manual of Procedure, by substituting in its place the following:

Appeals under Section 109 of the By-Laws shall be taken in accordance with the following procedures:

Appeals to the Department Commander. Appeals to the Department Commander shall be made within thirty (30) days of the act or decision from which the appeal is taken. All appeals shall be made in writing and shall

be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Department Commander at Department Headquarters.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Department Commander shall conduct such inquiry as he deems appropriate, and shall send a copy of the written appeal papers to the Post, County Council or District or respective Commander whose act or decision is the subject of the appeal. Such Post, County Council, District or respective Commander may make written response within thirty (30) days. A copy of such response shall be mailed to the member making the appeal, who shall have ten (10) days from the date of such response to make any further written submission to the Department Commander.

The Department Commander shall decide the appeal and shall inform the member and Post, County Council or District or respective Commander in writing that the appeal is denied, or if not denied, the relief granted the member. In the event that no written decision is rendered within thirty (30) days, the appeal shall be considered denied.

Appeals to the Commander-in-Chief. Appeals to the Commander-in-Chief from the acts or decisions of the Department Commander (including decisions on an appeal made to the Department Commander), the Department Council of Administration or the Department Convention shall be made within thirty (30) days of the act or decision from which the appeal is taken. All appeals shall be made in writing and shall be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Commander-in-Chief at Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Headquarters.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Commander-in-Chief shall conduct such inquiry as he deems appropriate, and shall send a copy of the written appeal papers to the Department Commander or Department Council of Administration whose act or decision is the subject of the appeal. With respect to an appeal from the Department Commander's decision on an appeal made to him, the Department Commander shall, within fifteen (15) days, forward copies of the written appeal, any responses and his decision to the Commander-in-Chief. The Department Commander or the Department Council of Administration may make written response to the member's appeal within thirty (30) days. A copy of such response shall be mailed to the member making the appeal, who shall have ten (10) days from the date of such response to make any further written submission to the Commander-in-Chief.

Thereafter, the Commander-in-Chief shall decide the appeal and shall inform the member and the Department Commander or Department Council of Administration in writing that the appeal is denied, or if not denied, the relief granted the member. In the event that no written decision is rendered within one-hundred twenty (120) days, the appeal shall be considered denied.

Appeals to the National Council of Administration. Appeals to the Nation-

al Council of Administration shall be made within thirty (30) days of the acts or decisions of the Commander-in-Chief from which appeal is taken. All such appeals shall be in writing and shall be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the National Council of Administration at National Headquarters, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the National Council of Administration shall advise the member of the time and place that the matter will be considered and decided. The National Council shall determine the manner in which the matter will be considered. The member shall have the right to appear at his own expense, personally or by counsel, at such time and place as the matter is considered. The National Council of Administration shall decide the appeal and shall inform the member in writing of its decision.

Each of the above listed written appeals shall:

1. Describe the act or decision from which the appeal is taken and the manner in which the matter at issue has been handled.
2. State all facts known to the member concerning the matter at issue.
3. Specify the provision or provisions of the Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or the laws or usages of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States which the act or decision violates or contradicts.
4. State the relief requested by the member.

Computation of time.

With respect to appeals within a specific number of days, it shall mean calendar days. The time shall be calculated beginning with the day upon which the decision at the previous level was either hand delivered or mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the member. Any required action by the member must be made in writing and mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, and postmarked not later than the date due. The Commander-in-Chief may, at his sole discretion grant an extension, provided the request is received prior to the expiration of the time frame originally prescribed and that the request is for good and sufficient cause.

APPROVED

M-13

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE II—POSTS

Section 201— Formation, Chartering and Instituting.

Amend Section 201- Formation, Chartering and Instituting, Manual of Pro-

cedure, by deleting it in its entirety and substituting in its place the following:

Section 201—Formation, Institution and Chartering.

Formation.

1. Obtain New Post Starter Kit from Department Headquarters.

Complete Charter Application.

Submit completed charter application, membership application and membership transmittal to Department Headquarters.

Approval by Department Commander

Institution. The Department Commander having jurisdiction shall designate an instituting officer. The instituting officer shall be a member in good standing and shall hold or have held an office equal to or of higher rank than Post Commander. The instituting officer shall be responsible for the proper institution of the Post. No Post shall be instituted with less than twenty-five (25) members of the new post present.

The instituting officer shall review all documentation submitted by members being mustered to verify eligibility. After such institution, election and installation of officers, the instituting officer shall submit the report of institution to Department Headquarters.

Chartering. After ninety (90) days, the Post Commander shall verify the information necessary for the issuance of the charter. When a charter has been issued and signed by the Commander-in-Chief, it can only be changed as provided for in the By-Laws and/or Manual of Procedure.

REJECTED

M-14

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE II—POSTS

Section 202— By-Laws.

Amend Section 202- By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, by substituting in its place the following:

Copies of By-Laws, including amendments, adopted by a Post shall, within thirty (30) days, be forwarded to the Department Commander for review and forwarding to the Commander-in-Chief. By-Laws or amendments adopted by a Post shall become effective upon review by the Commander-in-Chief, provided such By-Laws do not conflict with the By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of

the United States.

APPROVED

M-15

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE II—POSTS

Section 203— Regular and Special Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

Amend Section 203- Regular and Special Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees, Manual of Procedure, by substituting in its place the following:

Special meetings must be called for a date not more than fourteen (14) days after: (a) The Post Commander receives the signed, written request; or (b) The majority vote of the members present at a regular meeting; or (c) The date upon which the Post Commander determines that a special meeting may be necessary. The Post Adjutant shall give notice, in writing, of the time and place of any special meeting and of the business to be transacted, such notice to be given in such manner as to reasonably reach members at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the time set for the meeting.

The Post Commander shall call a special meeting upon the signed written request of seven (7) members or upon the vote of a majority of the members present at a regular meeting. The Post Commander may call a special meeting of the Post whenever in his opinion it may be necessary for the welfare of the Post.

No business shall be transacted at any special meeting except that for which the meeting is called.

REJECTED

M-16

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE II—POSTS

Section 206— Change of Location; Change of Meeting Place.

Amend Section 206- Change of Location; Change of Meeting Place, Manual of Procedure, by deleting it in its entirety and substituting in its place the following:

Section 206-Change of Location, Meeting Place, Day or Time.

A Post may, after at least thirty (30) days written notice to the Department Commander and members of the Post, change its chartered location upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a regular or special meeting. Upon recommendation of the Department Commander, an amended Charter will be issued by the Commander-in-Chief. No change may be effected until an amended Charter is issued.

At such time as the Post changes its location from one community to another, any portion of the Post name that relates to the geographical area or community from which it has relocated shall be deleted from its name.

A Post may, after at least fourteen (14) days written notice to the Department Commander and members of the Post, change its meeting place, appointed day or time upon a majority vote of the members present at a regular or special meeting.

APPROVED

M-17

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE II—POSTS**Section 208— Change of Name.**

Amend Section 208- Change of Name, Manual of Procedure, by substituting in its place the following:

A Post may, after at least thirty (30) days written notice to the Department Commander and members of the Post, change its name upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a regular or special meeting. Upon recommendation of the Department Commander, an amended Charter will be issued by the Commander-in-Chief. No change may be effected until an amended Charter is issued.

A Post shall not change its name to the name of a living person nor adopt a name already adopted by any other Post in good standing in the Department.

APPROVED

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND
INTERNAL ORGANIZATION**

No. 201 (Submitted by Department of Kansas)

PROTECTIVE MAILING COVERS FOR VFW MAGAZINES

(Disapproved)

No. 202 (Submitted by Department of Kansas)

VETERANS "FIND A BUDDY" INFORMATION SERVICE

(Disapproved)

No. 203 (Submitted by Departments of Connecticut & Massachusetts)

REINSTATE DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDING

(Disapproved)

No. 204 (Submitted by Department of Georgia)

TO CORRECT THE DISPARITY BETWEEN AWARDS FOR SCOUT OF THE
YEAR AND THE OTHER VFW YOUTH RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

(Disapproved)

No. 205 (Submitted by Department of Wisconsin)

REVIEW REGULATION HEADGEAR

(Disapproved)

No. 206 (Submitted by Department of Wisconsin)

PROHIBIT USE OF THE VFW SEAL OR EMBLEM BY
THE VFW POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE'S ENDORSED CANDIDATES

(Disapproved)

No. 207 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP CARD

(Disapproved)

No. 208 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

SUPPORT THE FOUNDERS DAY PROGRAM BY RESTRICTING
NATIONAL ACTIVITIES ON THE DATE OF FOUNDERS DAY

(Disapproved)

No. 209 (Submitted by Department of Montana)

THE BLACK BERET

(Disapproved)

No. 210 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

HATS

(Disapproved)

RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

No. 301 (Submitted by Department of Maine)

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION RETENTION OF DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL OF NATIONAL RESOLUTIONS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the members within our organization retain the right and obligation to approve or reject the National Resolutions at our Department Conventions prior to their being considered at our National Convention and that the right of approval not be arbitrarily removed by our National Headquarters. (Approved)

No. 302 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON, DC

(Disapproved)

No. 303 (Submitted by Department of Louisiana)

FRAUDULENT CLAIMS OF HEROISM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we endorse legislation to penalize anyone who would make a false public claim to be a recipient of the Medal of Honor, Silver Star or Purple Heart. (Approved)

No. 304 (Submitted by Department of Louisiana)

WHY WE MUST PROTECT THE AMERICAN FLAG

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veteran of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we cannot allow the radical element to claim flag burning as an exercise of free speech but an act of physical assault on America and its citizens. (Approved)

No. 305 (Submitted by Department of Louisiana)

POSITIVE CHANGES TO OUR BURIAL FLAG

(Disapproved)

No. 306 (Submitted by Department of California)

ADOPT THE "VETERANS REMEMBERED" FLAG

(Disapproved)

No. 307 (Submitted by Department of Arizona)

SUPPORT THE CREATION OF A JOINT MIDDLE EASTERN VETERANS
MEMORIAL FOR THREE RECENT INCURSIONS AT ONE SITE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that one appropriately sized parcel of land be obtained for the construction of a large enough structure to contain three specifically designed memorial areas representing the Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom incursions to honor those veterans who served and those who sacrificed their lives in the name of duty, honor, and country; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each of the memorials may contain still and animated displays to educate visitors of all ages of the history and reasons why these military ventures were necessary, and changes to update these memorials will be made as required; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the name of the structure be titled "The Middle Eastern Veterans Memorial," and that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States will fully support and endorse the creation of this combined (Approved)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL
SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

No. 401 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

POW / MIA FULL ACCOUNTING COMMITMENT AND AGENCY
FUNDING

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we remain steadfast in our commitment to the goal of the fullest possible accounting of all U.S. military personnel from all of our nation's wars; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon Congress to fully

fund the efforts of the Defense Prisoner of War / Missing Personnel Office and all operations of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command. (Approved)

No. 402 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

POW/MIA PUBLIC AWARENESS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we will provide routine distribution to the field of pertinent, credible and responsible information and reports, such as those initiated by the VFW National Security & Foreign Affairs Director; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each Department, District and Post is encouraged to exercise maximum effort to maintain the vitality and thrust of the POW/MIA program and appoint an interested member to act as the POW/MIA project officer or committee chairman; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support the annual National POW/MIA Recognition Day and encourage the display and flying of the POW/MIA flag. (Approved)

No. 403 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

DRAPE THE CASKETS OF FALLEN AMERICAN WARRIORS WITH THE U.S. FLAG

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we are firm in our belief that every fallen member of the armed forces of the United States has earned the right to have his/her casket immediately draped with the flag of the United States upon departure from any foreign country; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Department of Defense or Congress to initiate policy or statute to require the U.S. flag be draped over the casket of a fallen American warrior immediately upon departure from a foreign nation. (Approved)

No. 404 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ASSIST VIETNAM IN THE RECOVERY OF THEIR MIAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that at each level of the VFW—National, Department, District, and Post—strenuous efforts continue to be made to collect any information, which might be of value in determining the fate of Vietnam's 200,000 MIAs and of assistance in the recovery of their remains. (Approved)

No. 405 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to support decisive action in the war on terrorism by staying on the offensive against international terrorist organizations and groups, as well as rogue or outlaw states guilty of inciting, harboring or aiding and abetting terrorists. (Approved)

No. 406 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE WAR IN IRAQ

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the Commander-in-Chief and the brave men and women fighting the war in Iraq, as a matter of security for the American people, until victory is achieved, defined as Iraqi forces being solely capable of securing their nation. (Approved)

No. 407 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE THE DEFENSE BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Congress to significantly increase defense spending, over the President's proposal, to adequately fund all DOD's programs, to include military personnel end strength requirements. (Approved)

No. 408 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE IS A NATIONAL SECURITY PRIORITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the development and deployment of a ballistic missile defense system to protect our country, our deployed military forces; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Congress to fully fund a ballistic missile defense program as a high priority national security requirement. (Approved)

No. 409 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MAINTAIN GLOBAL AIR SUPREMACY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress and the Department of Defense to provide the aircraft that the Air Force and all services need to carry out their mission and maintain global air supremacy. (Approved)

No. 410 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE NAVY'S DD(X) DESTROYER PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the need to design and produce the Navy's next generation destroyer, and call upon the Congress to fully fund the DD(X) program. (Approved)

No. 411 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE COAST GUARD DEEPWATER PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we fully support the United States Coast Guard Deepwater Program, and call upon the Congress to fully fund the modernization and recapitalization of the Coast Guard's aging fleet through this program initiative. (Approved)

No. 412 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RAISE MILITARY BASE PAY TO EQUAL PRIVATE-SECTOR WAGES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the Congress to continue moving forward with its efforts to restore military base pay to full comparability with the private-sector by 2007. (Approved)

No. 413 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

LOWER THE RESERVE COMPONENT RETIREMENT PAY AGE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress and the Administration to lower the retirement pay eligibility age to 55 for all Reserve Component members. (Approved)

No. 414 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL AUTHORIZATION DATE CHANGE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the President of the United States to issue an executive order changing the effective date to qualify for the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to March 3, 1946; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Joint Chiefs of Staff to review all military operations during this period and award the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to participants of those operations that quali-

fy. (Approved)

No. 415 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AIR FORCE GROUND COMBAT RECOGNITION BADGE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress to direct the Secretary of the Air Force to establish a suitable combat recognition badge for personnel who are engaged in direct combat while serving as an Air Combat Controller, deployed with an army unit engaged in ground combat or in direct support of army units engaged in ground combat operations.. (Approved)

No. 416 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE HOMOSEXUALS SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Defense to review the current, "don't ask, don't tell" policy and replace it with a policy more consistent with the intent of Public Law 103-160. (Approved)

No. 417 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MILITARY RECRUITER ACCESS TO HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE CAMPUSES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support military recruiters to be given full access to high school, trade school, college and university campuses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon all private and public learning institutions to provide the same access and support to military recruiters as they afford other potential employers of their student body. (Approved)

No. 418 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SECURE AMERICA'S BORDERS / HALT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to fast-track funding to departments and agencies responsible to halt the flow of illegal aliens from entering the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Department of Homeland Security to expedite all initiatives to secure the entire United States border and ports of entry; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we insist the U.S. government

aggressively work to identify all illegal aliens and determine who should be deported and who should be allowed to apply for citizenship under existing laws. . (Approved)

No. 419 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HALT NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the Administration to halt, by any means necessary, North Korea's nuclear weapons development program and the proliferation of nuclear weapons or material to third world countries, terrorist states or organizations. (Approved)

No. 420 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT NATO EXPANSION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the continued expansion of the NATO Alliance to ensure the future security of Europe, as well as U.S. strategic interests in that region. (Approved)

No. 421 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the government of the United States to keep a substantial military presence in South Korea and increase its military aid and assistance to the Republic of Korea by providing modern state of the art weapons and technology to safeguard its freedom and promote security in the Pacific and Asian regions. (Approved)

No. 422 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and the Congress to strictly adhere to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act by approving the sale to the Republic of China on Taiwan such state-of-the-art military equipment, weapons and technology as may be necessary to maintain adequate defense capabilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration to employ its full range of influence to contain aggressive posturing of the Peoples Republic of China. (Disapproved)

No. 423 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

LIMIT FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF U.S. BUSINESSES AND PROPERTIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation to restrict foreign ownership of United States corporations, companies, businesses and property, and industrial technologies and/or processes, which could become vital or sensitive to the national security of the U.S. and which will protect the economy of the United States. (Approved)

No. 424 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INVESTIGATE THE ISRAELI ATTACK ON THE USS LIBERTY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to immediately investigate the attack on the USS Liberty that was perpetrated by the armed forces of the State of Israel on June 8, 1967, in order to determine the truth behind the attack. (Approved)

No. 425 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FULL FUNDING FOR THE JOINT POW/MIA ACCOUNTING
COMMAND

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we remain strongly supportive of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and urge the President and Congress to demonstrate their resolve to keeping this issue a high national priority by earmarking a fully funded dedicated line item appropriation for the JPAC budget. (Approved)

No. 426 (Submitted by Department of Kansas)

REINSTATE POW STATUS FOR CAPTURED AMERICAN SERVICE
PERSONNEL

(Disapproved)

No. 427 (Submitted by Department of Wisconsin)

RESOLUTION TO EXPAND ELIGIBILITY FOR THE KOSOVO CAMPAIGN
MEDAL

(Disapproved)

No. 428 (Submitted by Department of Florida)

COMBAT ACTION BADGE FOR AIR FORCE PERSONNEL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress to enact legislation directing the Secretary of the Air Force to approve the Combat Action Badge as a permanent qualification badge for wear by Air Force personnel. (Approved as amended)

No. 429 (Submitted by Department of Iowa)

CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL FOR ALL CODE TALKERS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge Congress to support the efforts to identify all Native Americans who served as "Code Talkers"; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon Congress to award all Native American Code Talkers the Congressional Gold Medal. (Approved as amended)

No. 430 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)

RESOLVE ISSUES OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS RESIDING IN THE UNITED STATES

(Disapproved)

No. 431 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)

SECURE AMERICA'S BORDERS / HALT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

(Disapproved)

No. 432 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)

SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to strictly adhere to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act by approving the sale to the Republic of China on Taiwan such state-of-the-art military equipment, weapons and technology as may be necessary to maintain adequate defense capability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration to employ its full range of influence to contain aggressive posturing of the Peoples Republic of China; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Administration and Congress to support the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan into the United Nations and the World Health Organization; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the Administra-

tion to afford the President of Taiwan (ROC) the same respect and privileges as afforded to other visiting heads of state. (Approved as amended)

No. 433 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

MILITARY RECRUITER ACCESS TO HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE
CAMPUSES

(Disapproved)

No. 434 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

RE-DESIGNATE THE POSITION OF SECRETARY OF THE NAVY AS THE
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to re-designate the position of the Secretary of the Navy to Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps. (Approved as amended)

No. 435 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

SERVICEMEMBERS BANKRUPTCY RELIEF

(Disapproved)

CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

No. 601 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ADEQUATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to mandate a budget and authorize appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs, which will fully fund and maintain the integrity of and enhance the veterans entitlement programs and health care system. (Approved)

No. 602 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF RETIREMENT PAY AND VETERANS'
DISABILITY COMPENSATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration to budget and the Congress to subsequently authorize and appropriate funds to immediately pay full military retiree pay to disabled retirees who also receive disability compensation, with no limitation or off-set from either earned entitlement. (Approved)

No. 603 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TIMELY ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the VA to establish, as a top priority, the reduction of waiting times for access to patient care and services. (Approved)

No. 604 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE VA PHARMACEUTICAL CO-PAYMENT INCREASES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose increases in the VA pharmaceutical co-payment. (Approved)

No. 605 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ENTITLEMENT TO NURSING HOME CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to mandate and provide funding for the provision of nursing home care for all veterans. (Approved)

No. 606 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ESTABLISH PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR RADIATION RELATED DISABILITIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to amend Title 38 United States Code § 1112 and provide the necessary elements to ensure consistent determinations under all Title 38 regulations (particularly 38 C.F.R. § 3.309(d)) regarding the granting of presumptive service connection for certain radiation-related diseases of skin cancer, posterior subcapsular cataracts, nonmalignant thyroid nodular disease, parathyroid adenoma, tumors of the central nervous system, prostate cancer, and rectal cancer. (Approved)

No. 607 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EFFECTIVE VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SYSTEM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support a viable and effective veterans employment and training system, which has necessary funding and capability to assist veterans in seeking and maintaining meaningful employment and re-employment opportunities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any veterans employment and training system be held accountable and that veterans receive priority of service in all federally funded job-training programs. (Approved)

No. 608 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VA HEALTH CARE FOR WOMEN VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide sufficient funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure necessary and appropriate health care services are available to women veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veteran Affairs to mandate a full-time women veterans program manager position at all VA medical centers. (Approved)

No. 609 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REPEAL OF VA HOME LOAN FUNDING FEES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to repeal all VA Home Loan funding fees. (Approved)

No. 610 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ASSURED FUNDING FOR VETERANS HEALTH CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to establish a statutory entitlement for veterans health care as a means to assure veterans receive the care they justly deserve, obviate diminished access as the current primary method of cost control, and provide a basis for justification of those capital investments needed to streamline processes for efficiency improvements. (Approved)

No. 611 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VA MEDICARE SUBVENTION

BE IT RESOLVED, that we support legislation authorizing the VA to collect and retain all Medicare dollars; and

Further Resolved, that Medicare subvention collections should be used to enhance, not replace, federally appropriated dollars. (Approved)

No. 612 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION VETERANS PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we support the strengthening and sufficient funding of an effective veterans entrepreneurship program in the United States Small Business Administration. (Approved as amended)

No. 613 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERANS UNDIAGNOSED ILLNESSES

(Disapproved)

No. 614 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXEMPT VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION IN DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HUD'S ASSISTED SENIOR HOUSING PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Department of Housing and Urban Development not consider VA disability compensation as income when determining eligibility for their Assisted Senior Housing Program. (Approved)

No. 615 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT FOR THE GUARD AND RESERVE

BE IT RESOLVED, that the provisions of the Uniformed Service Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act be strictly enforced; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve in its efforts to educate employers on the ever-increasing importance of hiring National Guard and Reserve members and the employer's responsibilities as mandated by USERRA. (Approved)

No. 616 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING ALLOWANCE

BE IT RESOLVED, that we seek legislation to amend 38 U.S.C. § 2102 to allow a second grant to cover the costs of home adaptations for veterans who are forced to replace their specially adapted home with new housing. (Approved)

No. 617 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTION FOR TINNITUS AND HEARING LOSS

BE IT RESOLVED, we urge Congress to enact legislation that will authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grant service connection on a presumptive basis for any veteran diagnosed after discharge with hear-

ing loss or tinnitus when such disabilities are associated with combat or a particular occupational specialty. (Approved as amended)

No. 618 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge a standardized licensure and certification requirement be adopted by the appropriate federal and state agencies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that recently separated service members be afforded the opportunity to take licensing and certification exams without a period of retraining. (Approved as amended)

No. 619 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR STATE VETERANS HOMES PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, we support a VA per diem payment that equals 50 percent of the national average cost of providing care in a state veterans home; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Congress of the United States to fully fund the State Veterans Home Construction Grant program. (Approved)

No. 620 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REFUND OF MONTGOMERY GI BILL CONTRIBUTIONS
(Disapproved)

No. 621 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERAN'S PREFERENCE

BE IT RESOLVED, that we oppose all attempts to reduce or circumvent veterans preference; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage both state and municipal governments to establish or continue to strengthen veterans' preference laws as an appropriate measure of honor for those who served in the armed forces of the United States. (Approved)

No. 622 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REAFFIRM SUPPORT FOR SERVICE MEMBERS OCCUPATIONAL CONVERSION AND TRAINING ACT (SMOCTA)

BE IT RESOLVED, that we support legislation to reauthorize and

fully fund the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act program. (Approved)

No. 623 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

BE IT RESOLVED, that at least one veterans' advocate be placed on the state and local workforce development boards; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we request all "one-stop" centers created by the Workforce Investment Act provide priority of service to veterans. (Approved)

No. 624 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASED DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO SURVIVING SPOUSES OF SERVICE MEMBERS WHO DIE WHILE ON ACTIVE DUTY

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge the Congress of the United States to include the survivors of military personnel who are deceased on active duty for the purposes of eligibility for increased dependency and indemnity compensation. (Approved)

No. 625 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

A GI BILL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to enact a new GI Bill for the 21st Century, which would provide an educational benefit that covers the cost of tuition, fees, books and related expenses along with a stipend to cover housing expenses at the university or college of the veteran's choice. (Approved)

No. 626 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HOMELESS VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to fully fund all veteran homeless programs to include the government Grant and Per Diem programs that are administered at the federal level. (Approved)

No. 627 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FURNISH HEADSTONES OR MARKERS FOR THE MARKED GRAVES OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we support amending Public Law 107-103 to allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to furnish a government head-

stone or marker to eligible veterans notwithstanding the fact that the graves are already marked with a private marker and the veteran died prior to December 27, 2001. (Approved)

No. 628 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REQUIRE THAT CERTAIN VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
SERVICE POSITIONS BE STAFFED BY VETERANS

(Disapproved)

No. 629 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCLUDE DENTAL CARE AS PART OF THE VETERANS UNIFORM BENEFITS PACKAGE

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide dental care to all enrolled veterans as a part of their Veterans Uniform Benefits Package. (Approved)

No. 630 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

IMPROVE VETERANS PRESCRIPTION DRUG ACCESS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to fill prescriptions written by private physicians for all veterans enrolled in VA health care. (Approved)

No. 631 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CHANGE DISABILITY PENSION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we request Congress to change the eligibility requirements for disability pension to include veterans who have received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Navy/Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Combat Medical Badge, Combat Action Badge or the Combat Action Ribbon for operations not falling within an officially designated period of war. (Approved)

No. 632 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REPEAL OF THE MONTGOMERY GI BILL PAY REDUCTION PROVISION

BE IT RESOLVED, that we hereby petition Congress to repeal the pay reduction provision of the Montgomery GI Bill. (Approved)

No. 633 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PLACE WORLD WAR II VETERANS IN ENROLLMENT PRIORITY
CATEGORY 6 FOR VA HEALTH CARE PURPOSES

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to include all World War II veterans in at least enrollment Priority Category 6 for VA health care purposes. (Approved)

No. 634 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ATTORNEY FEE-BASED REPRESENTATION AT VA REGIONAL OFFICES

BE IT RESOLVED, that we inform Congress of our strong opposition to allowing private attorney fee-based representation of veterans during the regional office claims process and appellate proceedings to the Board of Veterans' Appeals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we petition Congress to pass legislation that will relieve the Department of Veterans Affairs from collecting fees directly from veteran's disability compensation awards in fulfillment of any fee-based arrangement by the veteran with a private attorney, including those cases involving attorney representation before the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. (Approved)

No. 635 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMEND INTERNAL REVENUE CODE FOR THE VETERANS STATE MORT-
GAGE BOND PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to amend Title 26 United States Code to allow veterans who served on active duty in the armed forces after January 1, 1977, to be eligible for the Veterans Home Mortgage Program. (Approved)

No. 636 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

GOVERNMENT HEADSTONES

BE IT RESOLVED, that we petition Congress to amend Public Law 107-103 to allow the voluntarily purchase of a government headstone at an applicant's own expense through the government contractors for those interred prior to the enactment of Public Law 107-103. (Approved)

No. 637 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VA TO PAY FOR NURSING HOME CARE IN STATE HOMES

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to allow state veterans homes, who admit veterans that meet the VA requirements for mandated nursing home care, to receive the same average contract rate paid to private sector nursing homes for providing care to eligible service-connected

veterans. (Approved)

No. 638 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ESTABLISH A NATIONAL TRUST FUND TO COMPENSATE VETERANS
FOR SERVICE CONNECTED ILLNESSES CAUSED BY ASBESTOS EXPO-
SURE

BE IT RESOLVED, that we support the establishment of a national trust fund to replace the existing tort system for compensating veterans, their families and others suffering from asbestos related illnesses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the national trust fund will fairly compensate veterans suffering from asbestos related illnesses, and as appropriate, their dependents and survivors; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that veterans will be compensated through the national trust fund on a no-fault basis thereby ending the vagaries and lengthy delays of the current tort bankrupt system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the national trust fund established to compensate asbestos victims shall not replace, offset or diminish current benefits available to veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs compensation system. (Approved)

No. 639 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXEMPT PRIORITY GROUP CATEGORY 5 FROM
PAYING VA MEDICATION CO-PAYMENTS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to provide legislation to exempt all enrollment Priority Category 5 veterans from the requirement to make medication co-payments. (Approved)

No. 640 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND SERVICES TO VETERANS CHILDREN
WITH SPINA BIFIDA

BE IT RESOLVED, we urge Congress to enact a law to provide Vietnam and pertinent Korean veterans children with Spina Bifida Cystica with comprehensive health care coverage that will now include attendant services, independent living services, special adaptive housing and adaptive automobile equipment. (Approved)

No. 641 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR VETERAN AND SERVICE DISABLED VETERAN OWNED
BUSINESS VENTURES

BE IT RESOLVED, that we support the statutory requirements of P.L. 106-50 and the National Veterans Business Development Corporation in their endeavors to assist veterans and service disabled veteran owned businesses. (Approved as amended)

No. 642 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REPEAL THE SURVIVOR'S BENEFIT PLAN AND DEPENDENCY AND
INDEMNITY COMPENSATION OFFSET

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to eliminate the Survivor's Benefit Plan and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset. (Approved)

No. 643 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EMERGENCY CARE SERVICES FOR ALL VA ENROLLED VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, that Congress enact legislation to provide emergency medical care services for all VA enrolled veterans with life-threatening situations when VA facilities are not feasibly available. (Approved)

No. 644 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE IN SPECIAL MONTHLY COMPENSATION

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to increase the special monthly compensation under Title 38 United States Code §§ 1114(l) through (s) by an immediate twenty percent above the current base amount and additionally, increase by fifty percent, the current base amount of special monthly compensation under 38 U.S.C. § 1114(k). (Approved)

No. 645 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, that VA needs to increase the priority given to women veterans programs and evaluate which health-care delivery model demonstrates the best clinical outcomes for women; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA needs to increase its outreach efforts to women veterans because historically they have been less aware of their eligibility to VA programs. (Approved)

No. 646 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

BURIAL PLOT ALLOWANCE

BE IT RESOLVED, that Congress pass legislation increasing the burial plot allowance to \$1,000. (Approved)

No. 647 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MINIMUM COMPENSATION FOR HEARING LOSS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to enact legislation that will authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to amend the Schedule for Rating Disabilities to provide a minimum compensable evaluation for any hearing loss for which a hearing aid is medically indicated. (Approved)

No. 648 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

DEFINITION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR VA BENEFITS PURPOSES

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to reject any revision of the standard or definition that would change the terms of VA compensation for disabilities or deaths as a result of service in the armed forces. (Approved)

No. 649 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXTEND PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR KOREAN AGENT ORANGE VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to extend the benefits established under Title 38 United States Code § 1116 to veterans who served in Korea in or near the Korean demilitarized zone (DMZ) during the period September 1, 1967 and ending on August 31, 1971. (Approved)

No. 650 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PROVIDE GRAVE LINERS FOR ALL ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES WHO DESIRE BURIAL IN A NATIONAL CEMETERY

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress amend Title 38 United States Code § 2306 to allow all eligible beneficiaries who request burial in a national cemetery to be provided a grave liner at no cost to the family. (Approved)

No. 651 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ESTABLISH A BREAST CANCER STUDY

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Department of Defense (DoD), and other appropriate Federal Agencies to initiate and develop a comprehensive study to determine if breast cancer is increasing at a faster rate for current or retired military personnel than the population at large. (Approved)

No. 652 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXEMPT CATASTROPHICALLY DISABLED VETERANS FROM PAYING VA
CO-PAYMENTS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to exempt category 4, catastrophically disabled veterans from paying VA co-payments.
(Approved)

No. 653 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

COMBAT RELATED SPECIAL COMPENSATION

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to expand Combat Related Special Compensation to disabled retirees who were not allowed to serve 20 years solely because of combat-related disabilities.
(Approved)

No. 654 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE BENEFITS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to take necessary actions to upgrade Guard and Reserve benefits to include medical care, full Montgomery G.I. Bill educational benefits and entitlement to the VA Home Loan program. This will allow guard and reservists a comparable level of benefits as their active duty counterparts and provide a means to help ease the tremendous operational stresses imposed on Guard and Reserve members and their families. (Approved)

No. 655 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VA CLAIMS BACKLOG

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to allocate the necessary resources for the VBA to hire, train and sustain sufficient employees to overcome the claims backlog; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress requires VA to undertake effective succession planning to mitigate the anticipated loss to retirement of thousands of employees hired in the 1970's. (Approved)

No. 656 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TIMELY SURVIVORS' BENEFIT PROGRAM ENTITLEMENT PAYMENT TO
SURVIVORS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to ensure that each branch of the armed forces' servicing finance center releases the initial survivor's enti-

tlement check immediately upon receipt of the SBP claim. (Approved as amended)

No. 657 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXPAND DOD PRE-SEPARATION COUNSELING AND DOL TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we seek legislation to enhance DoD's current pre-separation counseling process and DOL's TAP services to allow the inclusion of nationally accredited service organizations in their programs; to expand their existing programs to ensure counseling services are available to all service members during regular duty hours; to add additional information on VA healthcare and entitlements, federal and private sector employment, information on homelessness; and to assure that individual service members will receive at least eight hours of transitioning services not less than 180 days prior to their separation or retirement from the armed services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that DoD's pre-separation counseling and DOL's TAP programs include information pertaining to National Guard and Reserve members and ensure that they receive the same level of services as regular active duty members. (Approved as amended)

No. 658 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MANDATE THREE PERCENT OF FEDERAL CONTRACTS FOR SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to amend P.L. 106-50 to state that the three percent government wide procurement goal for service-disabled veteran-owned businesses should be required and not be a "goal." (Approved)

No. 659 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

LUNG CANCER SCREENING AND RESEARCH

BE IT RESOLVED, that we request the Secretary's of the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to establish a lung cancer screening program for the purpose of early detection of lung cancer among military service members and veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Defense to request and Congress to fund lung cancer research through the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program. (Approved)

No. 660 (Submitted by Connecticut)

PROMOTE STEM CELL RESEARCH IN THE VA

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge the Congress of the United States to mandate and to fund a vigorous stem cell research effort by the Medical Research component of the Department of Veterans Affairs. (Approved)

No. 661 (Submitted by Texas)

ESTABLISH A VA MEDICAL CENTER IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY OF TEXAS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we address the inequality in the State of Texas and assure that no veteran is denied proper health care and a veterans hospital in the Rio Grande Valley be established to correct this injustice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our elected officials recognize the concerns of our veterans to assure that proper health care is readily available to all the veterans. (Approved)

No. 662 (Submitted by Illinois)

EXTEND A PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION TO BLAST SURVIVORS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to approve a presumption of service connection for conditions related to blast injuries so that those suffering from myriad conditions can get the treatment and compensation they need to make them whole. (Approved as amended)

No. 663 (Submitted by New York)

COMBAT PTSD A RECOGNIZED ISSUE

(Disapproved)

No. 664 (Submitted by Europe)

SPACE AVAILABLE FOR FAMILY MEMBERS OF RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge the U.S. Congress to amend the applicable U.S. Code to allow the travel of unaccompanied family member(s) on a Space Available basis for the purpose of visiting an incapacitated retired member of the armed forces institutionalized by competent medical authority in a medical facility distant from the normal place of residence of the retired member. (Approved)

No. 665 (Submitted by Europe)

POST EXCHANGE AND COMMISSARY PRIVILEGES FOR U.S. MILITARY
RETIREES RESIDING OR TRAVELING OVERSEAS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of State and the Department of Defense to insure the protection of exchange and commissary benefits for retirees of the U.S. armed forces in all future treaty negotiations, renegotiations, amendments, or adjustments of any nature. (Approved)

No. 666 (Submitted by Europe)

EXTEND VETERANS UNDIAGNOSED ILLNESSES PERIOD OF DISABILITY
ELIGIBILITY BEYOND DECEMBER 31, 2006

(Disapproved)

No. 667 (Submitted by Wisconsin)

TO ENHANCE COMPENSATION BENEFITS FOR VETERAN IN CERTAIN
CASES OF IMPAIRMENT OF VISION INVOLVING BOTH EYES

BE IT RESOLVED, that we support HR-2963, which directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to evaluate and compensate for both eyes whenever a veteran applies for benefits (Approved as amended)

No. 668 (Submitted by Ohio and Massachusetts)

SUPPORT FOR VA PAYING ITS FAIR SHARE OF THE COST OF CARING
FOR VETERANS RESIDING IN STATES VETERANS HOME PROGRAMS

(Disapproved)

No. 669 (Submitted by Ohio)

CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY LONGEVITY RETIREMENT PAY
AND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DISABILITY COMPENSA-
TION

(Disapproved)

No. 670 (Submitted by Ohio)

SUPPORT DVOPS/LVER GRANTS BEING RETURNED TO STAFFING
GRANTS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we support legislation U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service Grants supporting DVOPS and LVERS be returned to a staffing grant Veterans priority of service be expanded to include any agency or organization, state or federal, that receives federal funding for employment and training, i.e. directly or

through federal grants through the States (including the Workforce Investment Act (WIA); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support action that would require the Congress through the Secretary of Labor ensure that adequate funding be provided to support adequate DVOPS/LVER(s) staff within States to provide services to all veterans' requiring employment and training assistance residing within the State. (Approved as amended)

No. 671 (Submitted by Ohio)

SUPPORT TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND REQUIRE ADE-
QUATE STAFFING

(Disapproved)

No. 672 (Submitted by Michigan)

PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR MELANOMA WITH
RELATED DISABILITIES

BE IT RESOLVED, that we request the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ask for a National Academy of Science review of available medical data on melanoma as it relates to herbicide exposure. (Approved as amended)

No. 673 (Submitted by Florida)

LEGISLATION TO END THE DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPEN-
SATION OFFSET TO THE SURVIVORS' BENEFITS PROGRAM ANNUITY

(Disapproved)

No. 674 (Submitted by Virginia)

ESTABLISH A SEPARATE BUDGET FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we hereby petition Congress to immediately and forever sever the VA budget from all other government departments and agencies. (Approved as amended)

No. 675 (Submitted by Virginia)

COLLECTION OF VETERANS DNA BY THE VA

BE IT RESOLVED, that groups should be fully involved in the process of rulemaking by the VA to protect the veteran profile from misuse. (Approved)

No. 676 (Submitted by California)

REPORT ON DIABETES OF AIR FORCE PERSONNEL SERVING IN THAILAND DURING THE VIETNAM WAR AS A RESULT OF EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE AND THE DENIAL OF TREATMENT BY THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

(Disapproved)

No. 677 (Submitted by California)

AMEND THE FEDERAL TAX CODE FOR VETERANS' HOME OWNERSHIP

(Disapproved)

No. 678 (Submitted by California)

RESTORE THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES

BE IT RESOLVED, that we continue to be a co-sponsor of the National Veterans Golden Age Games not to exceed the amount of \$150,000 dollars per year in actual monies from the VFW. (Approved as amended)

No. 679 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HEALTHCARE FOR VETERANS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to provide sufficient funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that appropriate screening, diagnostic services, treatment and life-long case management services are available to every veteran suffering from TBI; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase its research pertaining to, screening methods, diagnostic tools, and more effective treatments for traumatic brain injury patients. (Approved)

No. 680 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXTENDING GULF WAR PRESUMPTIONS, REGISTRY, AND HEALTH CARE TO AFGHANISTAN THEATER VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress and the VA to include Afghanistan in the Southwest Asia theater of operations so that appropriate benefits, including eligibility for compensation based on undiagnosed illnesses, and medical care eligibility, will be provided, retroactive to the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to appropriate outreach to veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom to advise them of these benefits. (Approved)

No. 681 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CONSIDER TREATMENT ELIGIBLE FOR A PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTED CONDITION AS A FORMAL CLAIM FOR VA COMPENSATION

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to provide legislation requiring that treatment for a condition or disease recognized as presumptively service connected will be considered to be a formal claim for service connection for compensation purposes. (Approved)

107TH NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

Chairman: John S. Staum, Post 9625, Minnesota

Vice Chairman: Paul A. Spera, Post 144, Massachusetts

**Department
Post No**

Name

Massachusetts	Paul A. Spera	144
Minnesota	John S. Staum	9625

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

Chairman: Arthur J. Fellwock, Post 1114, Indiana

Vice Chairman: Larry W. Rivers, Post 1736, Louisiana

Department

Name

Post No

Alabama	Charles R. Stephens	3128
Alaska	John H. Taylor	9978
Alaska	Eugene M. Topping	4352
Arizona	George K. Mead	3513
Arkansas	Bobby G. Julian	6527
California	James F. Certain	1622
California	Michael B. Clay	4218
California	Robert A. Crider	1744
California	Leonard R. Herrst	1961
California	Buford L. Maples	5985
Connecticut	Edward L. Burnham	1724
Connecticut	Richard G. Di Federico	7330
Connecticut	Cornelio R. Hong	594
Connecticut	Carlton H. Parsons	9965

Connecticut	Dominic J. Romano	7330
Connecticut	Ronald Rusakiewicz	9460
Delaware	Paul R. Phillips	2863
Dist. of Col.	Franklyn A. Malone	7358
Europe	Patrick A. Buckman	9342
Florida	Harvey F. Eckhoff	7674
Florida	William R. Kirsop	8083
Florida	Thomas L. Kissell	7909
Florida	Billy B. Moore	8255
Georgia	Ray E. Brooks	2785
Hawaii	Norbert K. Enos	2875
Idaho	Thomas E. Monson	63
Illinois	Rick Frank	1461
Illinois	Patrick T. Green	5915
Indiana	Arthur J. Fellwock	1114
Indiana	David G. Havelly	5864
Indiana	Ronald E. Martin	7119
Iowa	Robert C. Peters	5981
Iowa	Roger D. Schwieso	941
Kansas	Mckinley Smith	8773
Kentucky	Cecil W. Caruso	10281
Kentucky	Lucian Townsell	5484
Louisiana	Larry W. Rivers	1736
Louisiana	Landry E. Saucier	1736
Maine	Alfred E. Michaud	1285
Maine	Peter F. Miesburger	9389
Maryland	Luis F. Fernandez	10028
Maryland	Victor W. Fuentealba	9083
Maryland	John M. Reiman	6694
Massachusetts	George D. Mengel	6645
Massachusetts	Robert M. Van Kirk	2394
Michigan	David L. Hutson	8846
Michigan	Jerry W. Kilburn	4034
Michigan	John H. Pray	3243
Michigan	Barry F. Walter	4005
Minnesota	Patrick T. Bohmer	246
Minnesota	Donald E. Heuer	9433
Minnesota	Gordon W. Kirk	8854
Mississippi	James L. Morse	79
Missouri	Paul E. Connors	30
Missouri	Glenn E. Davis	4294
Missouri	Donald L. Hentges	35
Missouri	Kevin C. Jones	4050
Missouri	Lawrence M. Maher	7356
Missouri	Joe L. Ridgley	8220
Missouri	Kim W. Wischmeyer	3987
Montana	Maurice J. Mills	2986
Nebraska	John R. Gollihare	9798
Nebraska	Dan G. Petersen	131
Nebraska	Billy C. Smith	7028
New Hampshire	Richard E. Angwin	1631

New Hampshire	Richard F. Therrien	1631
New Jersey	Fredrick Di Pietro	8840
New Jersey	G B. Eveland	7677
New Jersey	Andrew Henkel	2290
New Mexico	George W. Brown	401
New York	James F. Mc Nally	53
New York	Karl R. Rohde	1374
North Carolina	Ted H. Briggs	9010
North Carolina	Ronald E. Lief	7288
North Dakota	Ted A. Krogen	2328
North Dakota	Wayne L. Paulson	753
Ohio	Charles B. Adams	892
Ohio	William E. Cansler	9582
Ohio	Harry Crabtree	8402
Ohio	James R. Pisegna	1662
Oklahoma	Herman O. Allmendinger	1843
Oklahoma	Darrell R. Mc Gee	5263
Oregon	Joe W. Collins	1383
Oregon	Roger A. Ege	1909
Pacific Areas	William H. Wichmann	727
Rhode Island	Louis L. Bouchard	5392
South Carolina	Harry I. Bishop	3034
South Carolina	Gerald T. Pothier	10256
South Dakota	John D. Cauley	628
South Dakota	Stanley E. Seymour	5860
South Dakota	Dennis R. Sharp	2038
Tennessee	Henry Hooper	11333
Texas	Leonardo Barraza	9173
Texas	Jimmie D. Cantrell	9168
Texas	Glen M. Gardner	3359
Texas	Lonnie Garza	7110
Texas	Danny R. Henry	4372
Utah	Dennis E. Howland	1481
Vermont	Samuel R. Haskins	1034
Vermont	Frank A. Hickory	792
Virginia	James K. Martin	1503
Virginia	John J. Mc Neill	5412
Washington	Gary W. Hulsey	1949
West Virginia	Gene C. Bess	4768
Wisconsin	Eric E. Mortensen	1391
Wisconsin	Susan M. Samson	5373
Wyoming	A L. Ellefson	8473

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Chairman: Raymond R. Soden, Post 2149, Illinois
Vice Chairman: John M. Carney, Post 4643, Florida

Department	Name	Post No
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Alabama	Charles D. Gavin	3550
Alaska	Martin E. Miller	9785
Alaska	John W. Minnick	9365
Arizona	Frank Martinez	836
Arkansas	Lester R. King	4554
California	Kenneth W. Boren	3788
California	Richard L. Eubank	4084
California	Linda J. Fairbank	12039
California	Earl D. Fulk	9557
California	Alexander J. Griffith	4647
California	Bobby R. Price	2111
California	James R. Rowoldt	10040
Colorado	James E. Mauck	2601
Delaware	Jesse E. Kitson	6921
Dist. of Col.	Lester W. Hansen	2979
Europe	Thomas C. Buffington	8862
Florida	John M. Carney	4643
Florida	John E. Hamilton	7909
Florida	Stephen R. Surface	10094
Hawaii	George F. Barlett	10154
Idaho	Donald W. Landin	63
Illinois	Raymond R. Soden	2149
Illinois	Thomas D. Bailey	886
Illinois	Donald R. Smithenry	5520
Illinois	Terry W. Vance	9789
Indiana	Scott A. Martin	1152
Iowa	Phillip P. Bastian	5240
Iowa	Larry J. Bender	788
Kansas	Michael S. Clark	12003
Kansas	Robert B. Greene	7397
Kansas	Henry L. Petty	8773
Louisiana	Lennard J. Martin	5153
Maine	Henry W. Von Husen	1285
Maryland	George F. Helmcamp	5838
Maryland	Harvey A. Stephens	2632
Massachusetts	Walter Gansenberg	834
Massachusetts	Michael J. Gormalley	2016
Massachusetts	Donald R. Lafond	7239
Massachusetts	Clifford G. Olson	8699
Michigan	Charles R. Abner	9885
Michigan	Larry A. Coleman	1888
Michigan	Jackie L. Pickard	2780
Minnesota	David L. Adams	1782
Minnesota	Robert E. Hansen	295
Mississippi	William H. Long	4302
Missouri	Philip M. Duncan	7356
Missouri	Robert J. Eckerle	7356
Missouri	John S. Holton	7356
Missouri	Lawrence M. Maher	7356

Missouri	Donald J. Newman	2866
Missouri	Joe L. Ridgley	8220
Montana	Leroy H. Henderson	10010
Nebraska	Vern E. Hoffart	131
Nebraska	Charles T. Pfeifer	8334
Nevada	Le Roy A. Dupree	10054
New Jersey	Manuel Almeida	2226
New Jersey	Joseph G. Retkovis	5579
New Jersey	Frank S. Romeo	5579
New Mexico	Joe Gene Pacheco	1131
North Carolina	Michael B. Edwards	9488
North Dakota	Randy E. Kramer	753
Ohio	Robert W. Crow	4027
Ohio	Leon Johnson	6772
Ohio	Gerald J. Ward	5713
Oklahoma	Donald R. Fenter	5263
Oklahoma	Jimmie W. Mann	382
Pacific Areas	Richard A. Keeley	9612
Pennsylvania	John A. Biedrzycki	418
Pennsylvania	Allen Q. Jones	21
Rhode Island	Frank E. Lightowler	6342
Rhode Island	Robert E. Stevens	5390
South Carolina	William D. Campbell	3433
South Dakota	William R. Barlow	3442
South Dakota	William F. Cerny	9950
South Dakota	Harold O. Weber	1273
Tennessee	David J. Lopez	4895
Tennessee	George L. Martin	10904
Texas	Cary N. Brawner	12024
Texas	Kenneth R. Burton	9182
Utah	Donald B. Myers	8307
Vermont	Thomas M. Cilley	6689
Vermont	Rene E. Rocheleau	778
Virginia	Joe B. Martin	1827
Washington	Charles E. Vitiritti	9430
West Virginia	Robert B. Kesling	573
Wisconsin	Wilfred A. Johnson	10544
Wisconsin	Thomas J. Tradewell	6498
Wyoming	Franklin Conde	1881
Wyoming	Harold E. Lowe	4343

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

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Vice Chairman: James R. Currieo, Post 9972, Arizona
Vice Chairman: Cooper T. Holt, Post 1289, Tennessee
Vice Chairman: Norman G. Staab, Post 6240, Kansas

Department	Name	Post No
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Alabama	William C. Cooper	5732
Alaska	Kenneth R. Horn	4352
Arizona	James R. Currie	9972
Arizona	Forrest E. Barker	9829
Arizona	Dennis A. Dole	769
Arizona	William F. Weldon	1709
Arkansas	Edward A. La Vallee	8845
California	Paul Gonzalez	2967
California	Richard L. Morrison	1981
California	Ronald L. Rich	7264
California	Michael J. Salome	3982
California	Raymond C. Sisk	9791
Colorado	Warren E. Wellensiek	4171
Delaware	Robert D. Wilkinson	2863
Dist. of Col.	Clifford D. Fields	2979
Dist. of Col.	William W. Jones	341
Europe	Todd H. Ota	3885
Florida	Allen E. Hall	7909
Florida	J D. Morris	3559
Florida	Laurence Schatz	3559
Georgia	James R. Coggins	5080
Georgia	Wayne A. Hagan	6605
Georgia	James Rogers	2785
Hawaii	Alfredo Antonio	352
Idaho	Dale W. Smith	3646
Illinois	John W. Fessler	1308
Illinois	Robert W. Migalich	4763
Illinois	James J. Scumaci	8322
Indiana	Harley D. Andrews	6606
Indiana	Charles A. Bass	7119
Indiana	Kenneth A. Hullinger	2749
Iowa	Le Roy I. Jenness	2253
Iowa	Howard W. Ransford	775
Kansas	Norman G. Staab	6240
Kansas	Robert M. Davis	2709
Kansas	Robert B. Greene	7397
Kansas	Stephen L. Van Buskirk	7397
Kentucky	Robert E. Colasanti	10281
Kentucky	Hal S. Gladson	5662
Latin Amer/Carib	Edward C. Olds	3835
Louisiana	Kenneth G. Wilkewitz	4224
Maine	Thaxter S. Sedgwick	2499
Maryland	Francis P. Elliott	8276
Massachusetts	Thomas M. Brennick	834
Massachusetts	Leo F. Gatti	608
Massachusetts	Aaron R. Richardson	697
Michigan	Gerald K. Hawkins	3243
Michigan	James R. Pintar	6165
Michigan	Ronald L. Van Dorpe	2406

Minnesota	Michael H. Pierce	3723
Minnesota	Leon R. Ulferts	3915
Minnesota	James D. Vetter	1223
Mississippi	Leslie C. Blanchard	6731
Missouri	Robert R. Lyons	8100
Missouri	Lawrence M. Maher	7356
Missouri	David J. Morgan	5331
Missouri	Robert J. Powers	5077
Missouri	Lyle J. Seelinger	3118
Montana	James C. Aho	2252
Montana	Michael J. Bennett	4042
Montana	John W. Mahan	1116
Nebraska	Sammy J. De John	8334
Nebraska	Earl Stiner	3421
Nevada	Vernon G. Haddow	2350
New Hampshire	Donald R. Caron	7015
New Hampshire	Paul J. Chevalier	168
New Hampshire	Paul J. Lloyd	1631
New Hampshire	Frank M. O Neil	1772
New Jersey	Ralph Corno	132
New Jersey	Charles A. Duffett	62
New Jersey	William A. Goode	809
New Jersey	Edward J. Pajor	4374
New Jersey	William F. Thomson	6192
New Mexico	Eloy J. Howard	614
New Mexico	Roland La France	6917
New York	Michael Pascal	9486
New York	George S. Smith	53
New York	Dennis M. Sullivan	4927
North Carolina	Jack W. Kerns	9488
North Dakota	Richard J. Belling	7564
North Dakota	James H. Hapala	7564
Ohio	Ronnie W. Davis	5108
Ohio	Keith E. Harman	3035
Ohio	John E. Keirns	7174
Ohio	Gregorio J. Vela	7424
Ohio	John Wasyluk	2529
Pacific Areas	James H. Hudson	10033
Pacific Areas	Robert W. Zaher	2485
Pennsylvania	Ronald G. Tyler	1462
Pennsylvania	Jack E. Wettig	7418
Rhode Island	Leo R. Swider	2929
South Carolina	Lyn D. Dimery	10420
South Carolina	Julianne Scott	4262
South Dakota	Dale L. Jensen	628
South Dakota	Odean Solberg	2038
Tennessee	Cooper T. Holt	1289
Tennessee	Charles K. Miller	5156
Texas	William H. Beard	8787
Texas	Joseph D. Kruppa	5254

Texas	Richard C. Prewett	8932
Texas	Lazaro Velasquez	2397
Utah	Roy G. Kunzi	3586
Vermont	Bradley F. Reynolds	798
Virginia	G R. Faris	8467
Washington	Charles T. O Donahue	10018
Washington	George F. Riedel	969
Washington	Richard A. Whipple	2886
West Virginia	Roy D. Cooper	1212
Wisconsin	Walter G. Hogan	6498
Wisconsin	Frank R. Wilke	6377
Wisconsin	De Witt H. Woodworth	1530
Wyoming	Pete Quinnell	7756

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Chairman: John E. Moon, Post 2873, Ohio

Vice Chairman: George R. Cramer, Post 6869, Illinois

Department	Name	Post No
Alabama	Oliver W. Dial	924
Alabama	Rayburn M. Hill	3016
Alaska	John W. Mattison	9785
Arizona	Jon R. Peltier	40
Arizona	Donald E. Taylor	7401
Arkansas	Carthel B. Parrott	3543
Arkansas	Charles O. Wilkison	2278
California	Everett R. Martin	1732
California	Robert J. Maxwell	5689
California	Mike M. Maynor	52
California	Doug L. Rockwell	2323
Colorado	Phillip Garcia	4331
Colorado	Charles G. Watkins	4265
Connecticut	Anthony Di Nunzio	7330
Connecticut	Howard C. Harris	9460
Connecticut	Stuart C. Headford	9460
Connecticut	Bruce E. Messenger	9929
Delaware	Leroy R. Esh	475
Europe	Richard F. Kennedy	9534
Florida	George P. Beamer	4351
Florida	Sidney R. Holm	10178
Georgia	R D. Smith	4346
Idaho	Daniel K. Johnson	63
Idaho	Donald G. Riegel	889
Illinois	George R. Cramer	6869
Illinois	William H. Regan	8081
Illinois	Russell R. Rieke	5694
Indiana	Roger E. Baker	6841
Indiana	Thomas V. Burks	7119

Indiana	Ernest G. Condra	7119
Iowa	William J. Gartner	2099
Iowa	Clinton L. Hoferman	6172
Kansas	Buddy J. Haney	56
Kansas	Larry W. Meadows	9271
Kansas	Kenneth J. Stodgell	1650
Kentucky	Michael R. Allen	11404
Kentucky	Joe H. Humphrey	1170
Latin Amer/Carib	Darryl S. Dalley	3822
Maine	Rosemarie Lane	9459
Maryland	Charles Mc Conville	521
Maryland	Calvin J. Mitchell	10159
Massachusetts	Wilfred J. Arsenault	2346
Massachusetts	Richard L. De Noyer	1012
Michigan	Garry J. Goff	2406
Michigan	Norman R. Mikkelsen	3256
Michigan	Elmer J. Wurster	7546
Minnesota	Gary R. Anderson	6587
Minnesota	John L. Shalloe	8510
Minnesota	Steven P. Van Bergen	6587
Mississippi	Jerry A. Stowers	9573
Missouri	Eugene L. Hoeltge	5077
Missouri	Dewey M. Riehn	280
Missouri	Donald W. Watts	5553
Montana	Wade A. Kidder	5514
Nebraska	Roger C. Broeker	1652
Nebraska	Gerald L. Ludwig	7998
Nevada	Thomas W. Piefer	1753
New Hampshire	Michael S. Annis	2860
New Hampshire	John M. Lilly	1698
New Jersey	Fred G. Betteridge	1963
New Jersey	Donald E. Marshall	9503
New Jersey	John T. Maxwell	1795
New Jersey	Michael H. Wyson	9503
New Mexico	Eugene L. Chambers	1477
New York	Edward C. Bassett	524
New York	Nicholas D. Frederes	53
North Carolina	Colon J. Warren	9103
North Dakota	Thomas G. Bernotas	4324
Ohio	John E. Moon	2873
Ohio	Merton S. Compton	7424
Oklahoma	Dean Derieg	4613
Oklahoma	Kenneth C. Pike	4876
Oklahoma	Stacy Reddig	1857
Oregon	Jason Carroll	3973
Oregon	Frederick T. Kolbeck	3232
Pacific Areas	James E. Oden	9951
Pennsylvania	John A. Brenner	2493
Pennsylvania	Dwight R. Fuhrman	8896
Pennsylvania	Ronald G. Herman	8951

Rhode Island	Roger J. Lavoie	5392
Rhode Island	William J. O'Donnell	2396
South Carolina	Wilton L. Fowler	9273
South Dakota	Linda M. Nelson	791
Tennessee	Harry L. Carroll	1733
Tennessee	John Furgess	1970
Tennessee	Gary W. Hensley	1990
Tennessee	Raymond J. Rich	4641
Texas	James E. Nier	8919
Texas	Ferrell E. Warden	8552
Texas	Daniel L. West	3413
Utah	Charles M. Edwards	4918
Vermont	James S. Forest	782
Virginia	Joseph O. Longstreet	3219
Washington	Donald E. Bracken	2289
West Virginia	Terry Z. Scarbro	4326
Wisconsin	Dale F. Hundt	8483
Wisconsin	Larry Kutschma	5811
Wisconsin	John M. Taylor	2823
Wyoming	James Pedersen	2673

SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW/MIA

Chairman: James N. Goldsmith, Post 4931, Michigan
Vice Chairman Edward S. Banas, Post 10004, Connecticut
Vice Chairman John W. Smart, Post 483, New Hampshire

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: John F. Gwizdak, Post 5080, Georgia
Vice Chairman: Thomas A. Pouliot, Post 1116, Montana

Department	Name	Post No
Alabama	George H. Jones	6073
Alaska	William Timmons	9978
Arizona	Marvin C. Link	3516
Arizona	Leroy H. Servin	7401
Arkansas	A M. Armstrong	2283
Arkansas	Ernest D. Kyzer	3543
Arkansas	Michael A. Switser	4548
California	Howard L. Hagen	2967
California	Arthur L. Harris	5179
California	Larry J. Stroud	12023
Colorado	Robert M. Kidd	3917
Colorado	Franz J. Wedemann	5061
Connecticut	Ronald Christopher	5095
Connecticut	William A. Hornok	1673

Delaware	James R. Withrow	6483
Dist. of Col.	William L. Bradshaw	284
Dist. of Col.	John P. Breen	2979
Dist. of Col.	Walter H. Brown	9755
Europe	Dale R. Nagan	10708
Florida	William C. Bloomquist	7674
Florida	Eugene Le Shore	10174
Georgia	John F. Gwizdak	5080
Georgia	Roy L. Jordan	6686
Georgia	George A. Langford	6542
Georgia	Joe T. Wood	8452
Hawaii	John S. Chapman	10154
Hawaii	Mapu S. Jamias	3391
Idaho	Kenneth E. Pitcher	10043
Illinois	Raoul L. Barnes	1769
Illinois	Glen F. Goodrich	4495
Illinois	Jules D. Spindler	4549
Indiana	Paul D. Curtice	1257
Indiana	John L. Dahman	1421
Iowa	William Desplanque	1655
Iowa	Donald L. Gilbert	733
Kansas	Jefferson D. Lawson	1650
Kansas	Charles L. Shoemaker	12003
Kentucky	Gerald L. Kayrouz	1170
Kentucky	Robert N. Roland	5480
Louisiana	Philip R. Volz	5951
Maine	Richard B. Filliettaz	6977
Maryland	James L. Youngblood	9083
Massachusetts	Thomas O. Paul	801
Massachusetts	James F. Williams	8164
Michigan	Ronald L. Amend	7486
Michigan	John J. Harrow	3724
Michigan	James A. Van Hauter	4553
Minnesota	Thomas L. Hanson	1639
Minnesota	Alcuin G. Loehr	4847
Missouri	James L. Fields	741
Missouri	Kathleen S. Lee	30
Missouri	T J. Lundy	473
Missouri	Phillip A. Pippins	2593
Montana	Thomas A. Pouliot	1116
Montana	Joe R. Fletcher	1087
Nebraska	Leroy Z. Clausen	4996
Nebraska	Rolland E. Hild	8334
Nevada	Thomas A. Vick	10054
New Hampshire	Billy J. Floyd	1631
New Hampshire	Robert T. St Onge	8214
New Jersey	Richard C. Foster	5343
New Jersey	Pierre Lamereaux	2314
New Mexico	George A. Martinez	1131
New York	John S. Brunato	53

North Carolina	Saundra F. Clagett	6018
North Carolina	Jason L. Schoolcraft	8073
North Carolina	Arthur A. Shull	2843
North Dakota	Dale T. Ronning	7564
Ohio	Francis L. Clendenen	9473
Ohio	Chuck Keller	3761
Ohio	Larry D. Moore	3494
Ohio	Robert A. Poole	2850
Oklahoma	Billie D. Mc Gill	3077
Oregon	Robert L. George	3973
Oregon	Dennis G. Guthrie	4108
Oregon	Norman M. Henshen	7384
Pacific Areas	Clifton W. Wilsey	2485
Pennsylvania	Carmen A. De Santi	2198
Pennsylvania	Robert C. Eiler	8805
Pennsylvania	George W. Mullen	4480
Rhode Island	Armondo C. Azzinaro	8955
Rhode Island	Carmino M. Calvitto	45
Rhode Island	Salvatore J. Capirchio	2396
Rhode Island	Richard H. La Croix	5392
South Dakota	Lorne F. Ruzicka	3312
Tennessee	Robert C. Mugridge	11160
Tennessee	Edward F. Southern	4862
Texas	Dennis M. Barber	3892
Texas	Wayne A. Depute	6378
Texas	John R. Fair	8231
Texas	Howard Klotz	8787
Utah	H M. Jensen	1481
Vermont	Kevin T. Maloney	6689
Virginia	Dennis M. Cullinan	7916
Virginia	William R. Shifflett	9292
Washington	William J. Broadwater	1435
West Virginia	Clifford K. Gwinn	9097
Wisconsin	Frank L. Capps	987
Wisconsin	Troy J. Tuschel	8320
Wisconsin	Grant A. Wolf	9060
Wyoming	Robert L. Craft	11453

